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TRB

from Washington ®
March 5, 1977

Wrong Number

If you ask me (nobody has) I think President Carter's first-of-its-kind, two-hour radio call-in this Saturday (March 5) is a poor idea.

You can call in from any part of the country, as I understand it, and if you aren't screened out by the staff you may find yourself talking to Jimmy. It will last from two p.m. to four p.m. EST according to tentative plans (which may be changed) and what you say and what Jimmy says will be broadcast, and Walter Cronkite will moderate.

The purpose is plain. The President doesn't want to lose the common touch. He is so eager to keep it that he carries his travel bag, takes the oath as "Jimmy," walks from the Capitol, sends Amy to public school. Everyone who has written about the presidency knows and notes how the office isolates the man. Nobody has struggled harder in modern times to break through the barrier than this President, and his success to date has been brilliant. Word from the country is that the public loves Carter's blue-jean simplicity. A month after he took office his popularity remains high.

Somewhere or other, however, there is a line between informality and showmanship, and I think the call-in caper is perilously close to the line. Maybe I am wrong. Maybe we stand at the beginning of a new era where we can dial-a-President at will. But for the following reasons I think the first interesting experiment may be the last.

One of the greatest powers a President has is to command free broadcasting time. Granted that the Saturday call-in show is for radio alone, the principle is the same. It is an attribute of the "imperial presidency." To dilute this kind of a presidency he is using one of its perquisites. Presidential critics, political rivals, have no such privilege. Save at elections (and not fully then) they can air their views only by buying radio-TV-newspaper space. Ironically, Mr. Carter complained of this phenomenon in the last election when Jerry Ford, merely because he was President, got media time that candidate Carter couldn't command.

The President has adequate means for keeping in touch with the country. He can send messages to Congress or appear in person at grave moments. He has a big entourage to give out statements. He has had a session with press association representatives asking him questions, and he has given a fireside chat. It is hard to pick up the paper without find a Carter comment. A presidential call-in lends itself to ridicule.

I suppose I am prejudiced but I think the formal White House press conference is the best means the American government has evolved for two-way contact between President and public: the press, respectful but probing; the President, nimble but newsworthy. It is an admirable adversary relationship with the press acting as surrogate of the public. Franklin Roosevelt had two press conferences a week; it is good that Mr. Carter has pledged himself to two-a-month—and held the second for February this week. I hope he can keep this up when the going gets tough as it certainly will. That will be the real test of Carter communicability.

Call-in questions in the nature of things have to be screened; it is no use saying they aren't "planted"; there will be editorial control somewhere in deciding which queries get through.

Finally, the Carter administration runs some danger of boring the folks. It has been fun so far; nobody has seen anything like it. We have a unique system of electing a President and then finding out afterwards what we've got. Jimmy Carter is the strangest President of modern times, a peanut farmer who is "twice born," and also a nuclear engineer and ex-submarine officer. Most Presidents learn to husband their appearances and not to trivialize them; the mystique of the office is important; it helps to govern a nation, it should not be avoided as "imperial"; it does not spring from the ambition of a man but from the grandeur of the job. Like a film from a self-developing camera the Carter image is taking shape before our eyes, from a blur to a man. Let's hope it's not over-exposed.

Reporters watched a couple of good shows here last week: Paul Warnke being hazed by conservatives on the Senate Armed Services committee, and

(continued on page 40)

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A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 176, No. 10, Issue 3243, March 5, 1977. Published weekly (except the issues of January 8, July 16, August 13, August 27, December 31) and distributed by *The New Republic*, Inc., 1220 19th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20036. Phone 331-7494. Single copy, 75¢; Yearly subscriptions, $21; foreign, $24; students, $14.

Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies and changes of address to Subscription Department, *The New Republic*, 381 West Center Street, Marion, Ohio 43302. Copyright 1977 by *The New Republic*, Inc. Item g. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Reader's Guide.

Cover: "George Bernard Shaw" and "Samuel Beckett" by Jack Coughlin.

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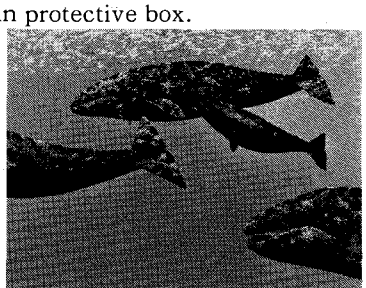

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Power, Fame and Fortune Too

Restaurateurs and real estate agents around Washington work hard. They deserve the new federal pay raise that came into effect last week. The problem now before Congress is how to convince the public that legislators themselves deserve it—"it" being a 29 percent boost, from $44,600 to $57,500 a year. The quid pro quo for our acquiescence in the pay raise is to be a new congressional "code of ethics." You may think that, having paid $44,600 for your congressman's body and mind, $12,900 is a small price to pay for his soul. Some legislators think it's too small, and they are working to make sure that what Will Rogers called the best politicians money can buy aren't sold cheap.

Most of the controversy concerns proposed limits on legislators' outside earned income. Representative David Obey of Wisconsin has proposed that it be limited to 15 percent of their salaries, or $8625 a year. This would mean that America's legislators would be expected to live on no more than $66,125 a year, unless they have access to unearned income such as dividends

The congressman who proposed a pay cut.

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or interest. Critics say this is insufficient, and discriminatory against those without previously accumulated (or inherited) wealth. We think it is a fine idea, and believe the unearned-income issue is a red herring that blurs the issue of what ethics are really about.

All sources of outside income, whether earned or unearned, may distort a legislator's judgment. But this is a danger that can be guarded against only at the polling booth. If you're concerned about excess influence by pickle interests (or if you just don't feel simpatico with the wealthy), you don't vote for John Heinz as your senator. But there is nothing unethical about Senator Heinz continuing to receive his Heinz Company dividend checks after he takes office. The ethical impropriety—or at least the appearance of it—comes with opportunities for income that arise after, and in fact because, a person has become a member of Congress. For those lucky enough to be lawyers this opportunity usually takes the form of legal fees. For others, it is most often honoraria for speeches. Senators Goldwater and McGovern go on television.

The ethical problems arise from the question, What did this member of Congress do to "earn" this money? No doubt there are cases where a legislator earns more than $8625 a year performing genuine services completely unrelated to his or her political position. But those cases must be rare, and one must wonder how this person can earn an honest second salary outside the office and also do the job for which we are paying $57,500 a year. Of course in most cases of large amounts of earned income, it is being a member of Congress that enables the member to earn the money. Not all of these cases contain overtones of bribery (although "honoraria" for speeches before trade associations amount to little more than this). But even if influence is not being purchased, there is something unseemly about a public servant cashing in on a position of privilege and power conferred by the people to be used in their behalf.

Is it really too great a sacrifice to ask for the power and glory, that a senator or representative make ends meet on $66,125 a year? Illinois Representative Morgan Murphy, quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, calls the Obey proposal "a rich man's bill" and says he needs the money he makes as a senior partner in a Chicago law firm to educate his children. Senator Heinz, apparently sensitive to charges of hypocrisy because of his large unearned income, says his colleagues should be able "to work extra-hard to earn money to put their children through college, for example." There is a certain unreality about statements such as these. If it is really not possible in this country to lead a decent life and to send one's children to college on $66,125 a year, we think this is a situation that should be brought home to members of Congress in the most forceful possible way. Nobody's giving the rest of us thousands of dollars for a few hours "work" to help pay tuition bills.

Touring the Middle East with Secretary of State Vance.

A Medieval Maze

Damascus

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance is a very careful man who talks to the press as though he were being confronted by armed robbers. He seems to have a teleprompter in his head on which he reads over every phrase before uttering it. Words come out of his mouth as though they were spliced together for a recorded message by the telephone company. The words themselves lack dash or profundity, but he makes up for that in precision, at least within the narrow limits of what he wants to reveal. He does not gab or confide, but neither does he seem to deceive. Confronted with the embarrassing leak that Jordan's King Hussein had been taking millions from the CIA, Vance no-commented, rather than deny and lie. In manner, Vance seems courtly and kind, proper but stiff. He does not josh, but neither does he bully. On Vance's freshman trip as the United States's top diplomat, one Israeli journalist described him as "a man who laughs heartily at a joke, but never tells one." Egyptian President Anwar Sadat called him "honest and straightforward," which is not the way one would describe his predecessor.

What else Arabs and Israelis thought about Vance and the movement of American policy, it may be possible to report in the future by retracing some of Vance's steps through the Middle East. What is possible now, based on watching Vance at stops along his way and talking with some of his aides, is an assessment of impressions the American party seems to have gleaned for reporting back to President Carter and developing into negotiating goals for American diplomacy.

Among the personalities he met—the leading Arabs, all for the first time—Vance seemed to hit it off best with Sadat, whose proposal that Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization form a "confederation" in advance of Geneva peace talks amounted to the only really new idea generated during Vance's journey. Vance had coolly complimentary things to say about most of the leaders he encountered, but an official aboard his plane broke into rave reviews about Sadat: "a warm and intelligent man who has obviously thought deeply about the problems of the Middle East . . .completely frank and forthcoming . . .I came away with a high regard for this man." Vance came off the

(continued on page 10)

COMING:
Nicholas von Hoffman on
not saving the cities.

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Correspondence

A monstrous fraud

To the editors:

Within a few pages near the end of the January 22 issue, one of the crucial problems for our society is mentioned in a book review and in a paid advertisement. Jerome Wiesner's review of George Kistiakowsky's book comments that Carter was "so restrained" concerning the "issues of Soviet military gain." In fact, in a tentative way, Carter came out against the need for the B-1 bomber but subsequently was silent on the issue, apparently as a result of lack of public interest in this issue.

The advertisement expands very cogently on the need to avoid the expenses of the B-1 bomber which would add nothing to our defense capability.

It is encouraging that the advertiser, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, feels strongly enough about this issue to invest the time and moral position to oppose this monstrous fraud which may be perpetrated against the people of this country.

I hope the earlier statement of policy attributed to the new president will be followed through in the current presidency and I hope that responsible members of the press will hold him to it.

Robert C. Wallach, MD
New York, New York

Double Dippers

To the editors:

The reference to the Dual Compensation Act of 1964 in "Double Dippers," (*TNR*, Feb. 12) implies it is intended to *encourage* retired military officers to enter the federal civil service. Hardly. The fact is that the Dual Compensation Act seriously penalizes retired regular military officers who work for the federal government. While such officers receive their full civilian pay, they are limited to the first $2000 of their retired pay, plus one-half of the remainder.

Military retirement pay is relatively generous (50 percent at 20 years' service up to a maximum of 75 percent at 30 years' service). But straight dollar comparisons between civilian and military retirement systems are inequitable. Virtually all retired military personnel have experienced war, repeated family separation, and frequent moves (often both from and to unpleasant locations). Moreover, the nature of military service demands vigor in leaders and requires that most officers retire in their 40s or 50s. Family financial demands, such as children in college, make it necessary for them to seek new careers at an age when they are not readily employable and in a difficult job market.

There are pros and cons in both the way our military forces are structured and the elements of the military retirement system. Intelligent public consideration requires that all sides and alternatives be considered. But inaccurate articles like "Double Dippers," which include the sort of halftruths in which Representative Les Aspin engages, may be guaranteed to produce far more heat than light.

Maj. Gerald H. Early
Ft. Bragg, North Carolina

The editors reply:

Major Early may not be, but many other officers are encouraged to join the civil service because of the government's generous benefits. What other employer allows its employees to be on the payroll and the retired list at the same time?

Short on gas

To the editors:

James Nathan Miller ("They're Giving Us Gas, All Right," *TNR*, Feb. 12) says there is no gas shortage because we've got enough to last several decades into the next century. That is perhaps 40 years. To me, that's a shortage.

In looking back over the past 150 years in which we progressed from an agricultural to a technological society, it seems insane that we built an entire civilization on an exhaustible resourse. Petroleum is somewhere in the production cycle of everthing from the dye in the clothes on our backs to the jumbo jets in the skies. When the oil and gas wells run dry, it is almost beyond the imagination what the effect will be on transportation, manufacture, food production and climate control systems in homes, factories and public places. Civilization as we know it will come to an end.

Raising or lowering the price of gas and oil doesn't put more of these resources into the earth and that is the heart of the problem. The wells are running dry.

There's a billboard in several locations here in Reading, Pennsylvania, a satellite's view of the earth. Superimposed on this planet is a gasoline gauge with the needle on Empty. Underneath is the simple question: "What then?" It's not a hypothetical question.

Bruce Hunsberger
Reading, Pennsylvania

Correction of Correction

Under a letter questioning my rendering of Zbigniew Brzezinski's nickname as "s'pig," a reply that I had discarded after checking with Brzezinski's spokesman, Jerrold Schecter, appeared by mistake on the correspondence page of this journal's February 26 issue. The reply that should have been printed acknowledged that "Zbig" is pronounced "s'big." President Carter, incidentally, mispronounces Brzezinski's first name. It's "s'big-ny-eff" as in effort, not "zignew" as in new.

John Osborne

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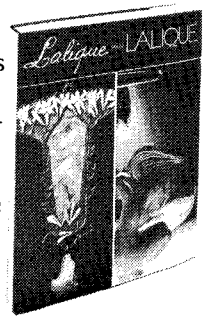

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Cyrus Vance *by Vint Lawrence*

pure negotiator. "Flexibility," in his mind, seems to be virtue, and he communicated this to those he met. Asked in Jerusalem whether he had found enough flexibility among the Israelis, he responded, "I did find flexibility that was encouraging to me." The comment lacked verve, but Israeli foreign minister Yigal Allon, standing next to Vance, broke into shouts of "hear, hear, hear."

In fact, however, Vance seems to have encountered little real flexibility anyplace. As a lawyer, he is given to diagramming his way through complicated cases; his notes on the Middle East must look like a map through some medieval torture maze. The exit says "peace," but every path seems to lead past iron spikes, quicksand pools and bear pits—to a stone wall. Members of the Vance party found the Israelis and Arabs possessed of the same fears, lack of empathy and stark stereotypes of each other that have frustrated other peace-seekers.

Vance said all parties were "desperate" for peace, but they also seemed unwilling to acknowledge comparable yearnings in the adversary. Each side regards the other's protestations as purely tactical, designed to win propaganda points in America. The leaders of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia told Vance they now accept Israel's existence as a fact, but Israel thinks it is a ploy. "Typhoid is a fact," said one Israeli. "For some people, the devil is a fact. Both are facts to be eradicated or exorcised. What we need is for the Arabs to say, not that we exist, thank you, but that we have a right to exist." Indeed, it is a phrase no Arab leader has yet uttered, however moderate or flexible he seems to be. The Arabs may be holding it out as a negotiating card against the day when they hear the assent from Israel, "Yes, for peace, we will give you back all your land." That is yet to be said by any Israeli leader.

On land issues, the Arabs and Israelis presented Vance, a novice to the area, with "upfront" positions only. Experienced observers found the dialogue depressingly familiar, even boring. Conceptual imperatives for one side—security for the Israelis, lost territory for the Arabs—were dismissed as trivial by the other. Israelis could not understand why they shouldn't be allowed to keep some of the Arab land they captured in 1967 to provide a security buffer for their country. "One percent" is all Israel said it wanted to keep of Syria and Egypt. But for Syria and Egypt, permanently losing the Golan Heights and parts of Sinai is comparable to amputating a foot—or rather their manhood. On their own side, Sadat and Syrian president Hafez Assad could not see what security small bits of their land would provide Israel in the jet and missile age. But, Allon, once a commando leader, told Vance and the press: "I know that there is no substitute for terrain. One can do with a little less. One can do better with a little more. But, what we call defensible borders are indispensable."

And if the rock and sand of Golan and Sinai pose difficult land questions, Jordan's West Bank is the most difficult of all, except Jerusalem. The Arabs want the West Bank back as a place to deposit dispossessed Palestinians who have a way of bringing trouble with them wherever they wander. Israel does not want them in control, unsupervised, for fear that radicals will use the West Bank as a convenient staging area for raids into Israel. The present Israeli government wants significant changes in the pre-1967 borders, which dug deep into Israel proper. For security reasons, then, the government also wants to leave Jewish settlements behind, and to post troops along the Jordan river—all of which strikes the Arabs as an intolerable breach of sovereignty, whether the West Bank is Palestinian or Jordanian.

If Vance developed any firm ideas on how to move Israel and the Arabs toward agreement on the land question, he did not reveal it. He did flash one signal, however, by asking Israelis if they would be willing to accept American guarantees—with terms unspecified, but presumably including a military treaty—as a substitute means of protecting their security. The answer Vance got was that "guarantees have no efficacy." In a crunch, Israel believes (with some historical precedent to bear it out), even American promises are unreliable.

The best Vance could take away was a notion that "thinness" exists in Arab and Israeli thinking about land. No final maps seem to have been drawn to which the Israelis can point and say, "Here Israel is defensible; here it is not." The Arabs have not thought out possible timetables for phasing Israel out of their land, and themselves in. Both sides will be subject to questioning on these points when their leaders begin visiting Washington. They probably will be asked whether more American sensor stations, like the ones now in

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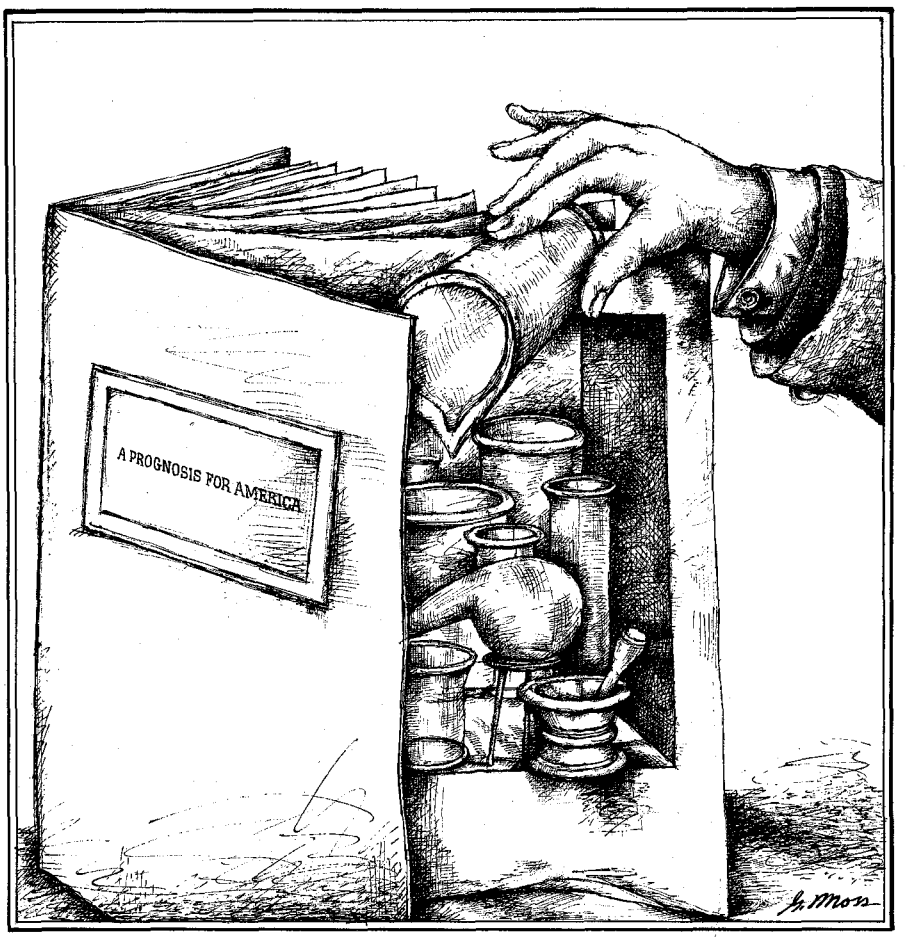

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Sinai, would help solve the problem. Israel is firm in saying, in Allon's words, "Israel will not return to the pre-1967 borders." The Arabs demand that Israel do so.

In the second major category of his inquiries—what kind of peace might be established in the area—Vance also ran into "upfront" negotiating stances. One aide said, "No Arab defines peace as more than a cessation of hostilities." Israel's "heavy forward negotiating position" is that peace means normal relations, trade, open borders and diplomatic relations, though Israel has a fallback, an "end to the state of war," for which less land would be returned than for "full peace." Again, no maps accompany the plans.

Demonstrating the "flexibility" that charmed Vance, Sadat seemed to back away from his earlier pronouncement that "peace is for the next generation," though it is too soon to know whether he had a genuine proposal in mind. "I didn't say at all that we are going to postpone peace," Sadat declared. "If Israel really wants peace, Egypt is ready for anything." The most vexing issue is not so much the Palestinians as it is the Palestine Liberation Organization. Israel's stance has not changed, and the Israeli leadership believes that its steady refusal to consider negotiating with the Palestine Liberation Organization has led Arab leaders to turn back to King Hussein as a major negotiator for the Palestinians. Israel was also pleased to hear Vance declare that the PLO would have to change its basic covenant, which now calls for the extinction of Israel as a Jewish state, before the organization can be recognized by the United States or admitted to the Geneva peace conference that Vance is aiming to have reconvened this fall.

Israel doubts that any such genuine change could take place in the terrorist organization, any more than "a tiger can change into a donkey." Israel cautiously welcomed Sadat's proposal for a pre-Geneva confederation of Jordan and the PLO. The conflict between Israel and the US could well come, however, over just how much change is to be demanded of the PLO before it is accepted as a party to negotiations. Among those accompanying Vance there clearly were some who were eager to find a way to have the PLO included in the talks. It is a view long-held by middle-level State Department officials. What is not clear is whether Vance shares their conviction that PLO leader Yasser Arafat as a "moderate" who wants to accept a Palestinian homeland co-existing with Israel, but who is beset by radicals determined to fight the Jews to the end.

The Palestinian National Council is supposed to meet in Cairo in mid-March, and the PLO is under heavy pressure from Arab leaders to get in line with their peace offensive. Syria, which all but butchered the PLO in Lebanon, has tanks surrounding Palestinian camps there, poised for a final slaughter if the PLO does not behave. One test of how tame the PLO has been rendered by Syria came during Vance's visit, when the *Washington Post* revealed that King Hussein had been taking money from the CIA. Observers thought the PLO would use the story as an opportunity to renounce reconciliation with the "American lackey," but it did not happen. PLO representatives showed up in Amman on time to talk with Hussein, who snubbed them, flying off to London. The PLO seems tame today; what it will be tomorrow is anybody's guess. Quick reversal is the rule of Arab politics.

For the moment, the PLO seems so bent under Syrian pressure that it may well write a new charter in Cairo conceding that states in the area have a right to secure boundaries, as provided in UN Resolutions 242 and 338. That is all the Arab leaders have done themselves. Would that be enough for the United States? And even if it were, would it be enough for Israel? The stakes are very high. Sitting with the PLO may be the first step to giving it the West Bank.

Now that Vance is back in Washington, it will be up to Jimmy Carter to decide what to do with his information. If he is guided by Vance's reporting, Carter's decisions probably will be more even-handed between the Arabs and Israelis than Carter's pro-Israel campaign stances were. When Vance was asked, in Jerusalem, whether a special relationship exists between the United States and Israel, he replied: "Well, the US and Israel have always had a special relationship which is very important to the United States, and in the process of the search for peace, we think it is our obligation to meet with all the leaders to find out from all of them their concerns, their views and to act to facilitate the exchanges between them so as to try to narrow the gaps which exist." It was a very careful answer.

Morton Kondracke

American Socialists convene as survivors in an age of disgrace.

Return to Good Nature

Chicago

The lost liberals! Robert Browning of course uttered the most scorching blast against them in his famous poem, "The Lost Leader":

> *Just for a handful of silver he left us,*
> *Just for a riband to stick in his coat.*

Browning was moved to his scorn by Wordsworth's retreat from liberalism in response to the course of the French Revolution, but his blast of contempt turned into a shout of conviction:

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We shall march prospering,—not thro' his presence;
Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire.

And these lost liberals are still with us.

This is one of the points from which the Democratic Socialists who met in Chicago last weekend begin; but one must be careful to understand the novelty of their position. The Socialist critique of liberalism is well known, but it has changed. In the current issue of *Dissent* Irving Howe searches out the common ground with liberalism which the Socialist can acknowledge and, I think he would say, must acknowledge. Socialism without some of the forms—one might even say, some of the manners—of liberal democracy has too often proved a monster for this common ground not to be sought; and a firm stand taken on it.

But there was more than that to be noticed at Chicago. It is the liberals' own retreat from liberalism, as Michael Harrington put it in his opening speech, that has become a part of the Socialists' concern. If the Democratic Socialist always has regarded liberalism as a half-full cup, he would say that present-day liberalism is a half-empty cup. The liberals in America today who have become "neo-conservatives" are half-empty cups who were once half-full.

This concern of the Socialist with the content of liberalism, with what at least made the cup half-full, is what gives an edge to the insistence of the Democratic Socialists—their claim and indeed their boast—that they are working within the "democratic left" inside the Democratic party. It is curiously this concern with the substance of liberalism, as the liberals retreat from it, that stiffens the Socialist critique and even sustains its ideological force.

But who are the Democratic Socialists? You may well ask. They are the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, and they held their third annual convention at a Holiday Inn in Chicago last weekend. The national newspapers had not sent any reporters; no political columnist had thought it worth attending. Yet I predict that they will be there next year, for the most practical of reasons, to which I will come. "The Holiday Inn Welcomes the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee." The incongruity of the sign made Michael Harrington laugh as we walked back from a restaurant. "They'll welcome anyone for a buck," he said. But it is from such mustard seeds that great things grow.

The membership of the DSOC has multiplied, as they say, 10 times in little more than three years: a claim that, as Irving Howe said, is a little like the figures on Soviet productivity, "the percentages are more impressive than the absolute amounts." In fact, there

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were 200 members three years ago, there are 2000 now. These numbers are not to be despised; but what matters more, of course, is the quality of the members, the seriousness of their intentions, their ability to organize, and not least their relationship to one another.

On all these scores, it has to be admitted that the DSOC is an unusual and, one might even say, enticing body. Irving Howe went around saying that it was the most good-natured Socialist organization with which he had ever been associated. He made the same point differently to me: "It is the most American Socialist organization I've known." The good nature—almost the good humor—was remarkable, and anyone who has ever known the sectarianism of Socialist groups, in Europe or in America, must be a little amazed by it.

"Of course there are ideological differences," Michael Harrington said to me. "People come to the practical positions we adopt from different ideological stances. But we do not put those ideological differences on paper. We may argue about them, they may inform our decisions. But we do not force their definition on paper." What is more, the leadership of the DSOC is fully aware that this is an unusual state of affairs, that the good nature has to be consciously maintained. From leader after leader, I heard the same caveat: "As our numbers grow, as we become more important, as more and more Socialists see us as an effective instrument, there will be attempts at ideological definition, even attempts by one sect or another to take the organization over. But we're on the lookout for that."

One would like to salute Michael Harrington for this good nature, and for much else: this intelligent and decent, impassioned and able, practical and dedicated man to whom the DSOC—as indeed all Socialists—owe more than they can easily tell. Yet as one makes the salute, one witholds it, for it must be given, if at all, to the others with him as well. "Irving may be right when he says that this is the most American Socialist body he has known," one of them said, "but the interesting fact is that most of us who began DSOC all came from very sectarian Socialist pasts, which you might almost call un-American." If one is to catch the unique flavor of this organization, one must listen to both statements.

For if it is hard to talk of Michael Harrington as a leader—a title that would sit cumbrously on him—it is nevertheless important to recognize that the DSOC has leadership. The ranks of its membership may be predominantly young, as they should be, but its leadership is predominantly middle-aged. These are men and women who have seen and been through a lot, from the '30s to the '60s. If one were to give them a label, it would be that they are survivors in an age of disgrace.

For the good nature of DSOC is not to be lightly mentioned or then lightly dismissed. That idiosyncratic American conservative, Peter Viereck, so rare and valuable a man, once said that all that we could attempt to do in these times was to "write with grace against disgrace"; and these men and women of DSOC are survivors who still speak and act "with grace against disgrace." The voice of civility is never to be undervalued; and to sustain that voice, even while one also sustains the passion to go on fighting to better the world, is a grace that is rare.

The leaders of the DSOC are not the only survivors. So are the young in its ranks. Some of them are survivors of the new left. Out of all the destruction that was wrought by and on the left so short a time ago—moral and intellectual and political—they have emerged with a lack of illusion, perhaps, but not disillusioned. Now and then, in some aside, in some moment that is registered but then let pass, the scars were shown. A wince. A quiver. A shake of a finger that was checked, as a memory returned of when that shaking finger became a clenched fist. So young, they seemed, to have returned already from hell, and so determined; with not a sneer, not a curl to their lips, ready to attack, but without spite; and ready above all for the long haul.

Nothing has been lost, while much has been saved. If any one man was the teacher to me, by public example and personal impact, of the kind of Socialist faith that I have always envied, it was Aneurin Bevan, the leader of the left within the Labour party in Britain and (if he is remembered for nothing else) the man who cajoled and persuaded the British middle class into supporting the National Health Service, for which he was responsible. At the end of his remarkable little book of political memoirs, he says that democratic socialism "seeks the truth in any given situation, knowing all the time that if this be pushed too far it falls into error." Democratic socialism must "achieve passion in action in the pursuit of qualified judgments. It must know how to enjoy the struggle, while recognizing that progress is not the elimination of struggle but rather a change in its terms." All of that is in the DSOC.

All of that is in it, its leaders and its ranks, with the precision, indeed, of good nature, but also of cultivated men and women. For what was really there in Chicago, what made the welcome of the Holiday Inn so incongruous, was a deep historical sense. The Holiday Inn, and all that it represents, has no historical sense. It would not know what guests it had last week, last month. The American Sportsmen leave; the Democratic Socialists arrive. This is the curse of capitalism, of which as ruthlessly intelligent a "neo-conservative" as Irving Kristol is well aware: that capitalism continually destroys not only the past, but even its own past. It devours yesterday; it welcomes anyone for a buck.

Irving Howe is a much more certain passer-on of the manners of his civilization than Irving Kristol; and it was the extension of manners across the generations that made the convention unusual to the point of uniqueness. For here was history, known and lived,

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brought forth to inform the present, so that we still may care, still hope, still fight, still organize, still act. Here was something redeemed from our century, with all its furies, not innocent (for sure, not that) but still strong with hope and endeavor; and today that is very rare.

Michael Harrington has a way of often covering his face with his hands. He sits listening, to any and every speaker, and one hand and then two begin to enfold his face, as he leans and even huddles forward with—not intensity, that is the point—but interest, absorption. I don't think those ears miss a syllable; I think that, as he listens, he strips away the slogans in which we all sometimes hide what we are trying to say, in order to search out what is individually new and to the point in what is being said. But if this is true of him, it is also true of the young in the ranks. They also listen, and bend their ears to catch the nuances of what their elders are telling them. That also is very rare in these days.

I will tell you in more detail of these people; and I will especially tell you of the exact drifting eloquence of Irving Howe: the kind of eloquence that reminds one of a mist (so different from a fog) when each drop of moisture seems to land on one's cheeks individually and intended only for oneself; and I will especially tell you of James Farmer's unabrasive but still cutting humor, as he spoke of the journey of the black in America that still has to be continued; and I will especially tell you of Vic Gotbaum arriving from New York as if the hounds of heaven were at his heels; and I will especially tell you of John Conyers with whom I tussled, and why I think we tussled; and I will especially tell you of others less well known, but people of whom I think your acquaintance will be long. But I will tell you here of only one.

If one is a visitor to such a convention, the temptation (and the danger) is to ignore the meetings on the constitution and rules. It was with some deliberateness that I took myself to the meeting of the DSOC that was discussing the constitution and the rules; but of course I was not disappointed. There can be few other bodies in the country in which such a meeting uses "a-historic" as an accusation to be taken seriously. "Who's being a-historic now?"—*there* you have the Socialists, but there also is every real democratic movement. But that is not even the main point of my story. The meeting was chaired by a young woman, Ruth Jordan, and as what she called "the crazy hour" came, when everyone rose to points of order, she handled the meeting with an assertion of authority without coercion that I will again claim is rare; for the separation of the idea of authority from that of coercion is deeply necessary. Out of an anarchy that all such meetings almost reach, she brought forth an order that was not coerced; the voice of civility, sure in its own worth, was determined and prevailed. If you wish to know why I think the national newspapers will be there next year, I can only here say that these are skilled people, middle-aged and young. They had a profound influence on the Democratic party's platform last year, and I believe they will have a profound impact on the mid-term Democratic convention next year. These are people at work, with knowledge and respect for those they wish to influence, and with dictionaries and manners; and time that they always seem to find.

They are the clean breath of our century; this time, I do not think they will be denied.

Henry Fairlie

This report is to be continued.

White House Watch
Carter and Congress

In the course of announcing the cancellation of 19 water-development projects of a kind that is specially dear to western politicians, press secretary Jody Powell indicated on February 21 that the education of Jimmy Carter on a very important subject is proceeding apace. The subject is the reality of any President's adversary relationship with Congress, regardless of whether the President and the congressional majority are of the same or opposing political parties.

When Powell was asked whether the congressmen immediately interested in the cancelled projects had been "consulted or informed" beforehand, he answered: "I think they were basically informed. Of course, on a budget, the Congress has its authority to dispose in its wisdom with [*sic*] the President's recommendations. I don't think it is general practice to involve them in the budget decisions before the budget is presented." This was true. It also was out of key with candidate Carter's frequent assertions during his campaigns for nomination and election and with similar avowals at his first presidential press conference that he as a Democratic President expected to assure a smooth relationship with the Democratic majority by close and early consultation. Powell's further statement that the President retains his power to impound and refuse to spend money that Congress appropriates led to the first public, on-the-record exchange of elemental four-letter words between a reporter and a presidential spokesman in the history of White House news briefings. But that was beside the point. The point was the accumulating evidence that Jimmy Carter and his people had learned in the first month of his presidency that congressional encroachment upon executive responsibilities and power can vitiate or even destroy a presidency if it is not checked when necessary. Although saying so became unfashionable in the aftermath of Nixon and Watergate, congressional excess can be as harmful as executive excess and a President's duty is to guard against both abuses.

The evidence that this is fully realized at the Carter White House abounds, even though the President

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continued at his second press conference on February 23 to minimize the basic and unavoidable conflict. His unofficial and ubiquitous friend and adviser, Atlanta lawyer Charles Kirbo, predicted in a *Washington Post* interview and at a session with Washington reporters that President Carter will have to appeal to the public for support of his policies if he is not to be frustrated by Congress. The new Speaker of the House, Thomas P. ("Tip") O'Neill, Jr., recently warned the President against trying that sort of thing, arguing that it would only aggravate the frictions. O'Neill knows, of course, that all Presidents do it in one way or another. He with his warning and the President with his disclaimers of any such necessity or intent were going through a ritual that confirms rather than denies the certainty of conflict.

Senator Alan Cranston of California said that President Carter complained to him and other Democratic leaders that too many members and committees of Congress require and get CIA briefings on secret intelligence operations and matters. Obviously angered by the disclosure that King Hussein of Jordan and some other foreign dignitaries had been on the CIA payroll for many years, the President was understood to have said that he'd cut the number of White House officials with access to "intelligence secrets" from 40 to five, a restriction that if broadly applied to classified information would practically paralyze the National Security Council staff. A related problem—the enormous and ever-increasing demand from congressional oversight committees for classified NSC and other information and documents—had become of deep concern to President Ford and some of his assistants before they left. President Carter's remarks to the Senate leaders suggested that it's of serious concern to him.

The major current confrontation is over the President's request for authority to reorganize the federal government and huge segments of its bureaucracy. In one degree and form or another, Presidents had the authority between 1932 and 1973, when developing revulsion against Richard Nixon caused Congress to refuse to renew the statute under which he'd possessed and seldom exercised the power since 1969. Jimmy Carter's pledge to reorganize and rationalize the federal bureaucracy, a promise that he managed to reiterate hundreds of times without committing himself to reduce the number of bureaucrats, was one of his central campaign themes. It's high among his presidential priorities and it's brought him into battle with one of the most formidable members of the House of Representatives, Chairman Jack Brooks of the Government Operations Committee.

Neither the President nor Brooks, a steely-eyed Texan who after 22 years in Congress is in a position to make infinite trouble for the administration if he wants to, is about to give way on the fundamental issue between them. The issue is whether reorganization plans submitted by the President take effect 60 days after he sends them to Congress unless a majority in either the House or the Senate votes against them, as the President proposes, or take effect only if they are approved by a majority in both the House and Senate, as Brooks proposes. There are other differences which provide some room for compromise, but there is no room for compromise and no prospect of it on this difference.

President Carter argues simply and strongly that he's asking for no more power and no more freedom of action than previous Presidents have had. To require affirmative approval of reorganization plans by both houses of Congress would, he says, subject his whole reorganization effort to intolerable frustration and delay. Brooks is enraged by the charge, which appears often in editorial and other comment, that he's continuing a raw grab for congressional and personal power that he began in 1971, when he first tried to require affirmative approval of reorganization plans. He says with great intensity and with every sign of sincerity that a true constitutional issue is involved. In his words: "To let a President propose and enact a law unless Congress vetoes it is to stand the Constitution on its head. We should delegate to the President the right to reorganize the federal government, but we must do it in a manner consistent with our own constitutional rights and responsibilities." One of his supporting arguments is that Nixon used a reorganization plan to set up the Domestic Council, put John D. Ehrlichman in charge of it, and look what happened—Watergate; Ehrlichman and one of his assistants on the council staff, Egil Krogh, convicted and imprisoned. The fact that all of that could have happened without a Domestic Council is never mentioned by Brooks.

The President has put a lot of time and energy into getting the bill he wants out of committee and to a House vote. His bill is in controversy but not in trouble in the Senate. Mr. Carter has conferred three times with Brooks, alone and with House leaders. He's met with Frank Horton of New York, the committee's ranking Republican, and with two groups of Democratic committeemen. Dante Fascell of Florida and 17 other Democratic members of the committee, and Horton and six other Republican members, have sponsored identical versions of the Carter bill. They comprise a narrow majority of the committee and could force the Carter bill to a floor vote over Brooks's prostrate body. They, the President and the President's staff lobbyists—principally two Georgians, Frank Moore at the White House and Hubert L. ("Herky") Harris at the Office of Management and Budget—hope to get what they want without humiliating Jack Brooks. He could be an enemy that no President in his right mind would want.

At his second White House press conference, the

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President dismissed the dire predictions of his valued adviser, Charles Kirbo, as "just a private citizen's opinions" and said, "I'm very pleased with my relationship with the Congress." Either he was acting or he's still got much to learn.

John Osborne

Carter's human rights campaign may stumble.

The Limits of Linkage

It is fine and commendable that the Carter administration is living up to its leader's campaign promise to speak out loudly and firmly against violations of human rights abroad—at least in the case of Soviet and Eastern European political dissidents. But if the US plans to give up its old role as the world's military policeman only to become its moral policeman instead, President Carter must define a consistent human rights philosophy to avoid international diplomatic chaos and confrontations. Discussions with fairly senior officials in the government indicate that there is little policy coordination so far.

The administration obviously has decided to take the calculated risk that US pronouncements on human rights in the Soviet Union will *not* seriously interfere with the march of detente, notably with negotiations for a SALT II agreement on offensive strategic weapons. A judgment has been made that Moscow's long-range interest in a basically sound relationship with Washington exceeds its annoyance over American moralizing about the fate of dissidents. The question is whether Carter's judgment is correct.

Quite wisely, I think, Carter is not playing the linkage game. He does *not* condition diplomatic progress on Soviet protection of human rights. When the Congress chose in 1974 to link trade preferences with freedom of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, the response by Moscow was the cancellation of the new trade agreement and a slow-down in Jewish departures. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment might have been more effective if it had not singled out Jewish emigration, and, had instead addressed itself to the larger question of political dissidence in the Soviet Union (which includes many Jews). Carter's approach, I suspect, may have a greater impact because it covers the broad area of human rights in the Communist countries and avoids specific reprisals. The administration is placing on Moscow the burden of linking US pressures on human rights with other aspects of the relationship. Carter and his men doubt that the Kremlin will paralyze what is left of detente out of petulance over American expostulations on Soviet dissidence. So far, the Soviet Union has shied away from formal protests; but, on February 20, *Pravda* warned the US that its actions "do not square with the positive development of Soviet-American relations."

Carter coupled his human rights pronouncements with an emphasis on a quick SALT II accord as a clear signal to the Russians that the US is not receding into a "cold war" mentality. Brezhnev may draw the same inference from Carter's strong backing for Paul Warnke as our chief arms controller in the light of right wing opposition.

But Carter's human rights policy, if pursued too vigorously, may nevertheless create grave tensions in the Soviet-American relationship. It is impossible to draw a precise line between what is a legitimate US interest in the defense of Soviet dissidents—an interest legitimized by the Helsinki Final Act—and what Moscow may more fairly regard as interference in its domestic problems. Profound questions of international law are involved, and the Carter administration does not seem to have examined these adequately. There is political pressure on Brezhnev to respond strongly to the American human rights push.

In the 1975 Helsinki agreement, the so-called "Basket Three" defines rather clearly the obligations of the signatories concerning the observance of human rights. "Basket Three" was the price paid by Moscow for the Helsinki package, which also confirms postwar frontiers in Europe in a fashion advantageous to the Soviets. The administration has been invoking Helsinki in its public complaints about the treatment of dissidents in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. It is generally accepted that except for Poland and Hungary, the Communists have been violating "Basket Three" provisions concerning their citizens' freedom to travel to the West, family reunions, cultural and scientific exchanges, sales of Western publications, free access of Western journalists to the Communist countries, and tolerance of domestic dissent. The Helsinki document is unclear regarding tolerance of dissent, but the US—like Communist parties in Italy and France—has chosen to interpret it broadly.

The second European security conference will be held in Belgrade later this year. The prospect is a major donnybrook over human rights, which may sink the conference. The US will go to Belgrade loaded for the bear on the "Basket Three" issue. The Communists plan to attack the US for failure to comply with "Basket Two," which deals with economic cooperation; they claim that the US has failed to grant them promised trade concessions. The US also is vulnerable regarding "Basket Three" itself; our immigration laws can be considered an obstacle to free exchanges of persons.

The joint Senate-House Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe was denied permission last fall to visit the Communist countries in order to monitor compliance with "Basket Three," and it is now

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conducting hearings in Washington, complete with testimony by exiled Soviet dissidents, to determine policy Congress should recommend to the administration for Belgrade. Clearly, the Congress expects to speak out forcefully in Belgrade on human rights.

Some Washington observers are concerned that Congressional "hawks" on SALT may try to incorporate the human rights issue into their basic opposition to the expansion of detente. A linkage between human rights and SALT would give moral respectability to the growing opposition to SALT II, including those who have tried to block Warnke's nomination. If successful, this effort would seriously damage Carter's basic foreign policy. So far, the administration and the Congress are not getting along nearly as well as one would expect in the "honeymoon" period. Thus Carter, his oft-repeated commitment to the defense of human rights in Communist countries notwithstanding, must cover his foreign policy flanks.

Dissidents in Moscow and the other Eastern European capitals take the view that if the US lapsed into silence again, their fates would be even worse. They believe that Communist governments *are* vulnerable to external pressures, and that there would have been more arrests in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union—possibly including Andrei Sakharov, the Nobel-Prize-winning physicist—if it had not been for Washington's recent pronouncements. The administration, by and large, accepts this judgment. But the Soviet Union has made a point of arresting leading dissidents such as Alexander Ginzburg and Yuri Orlov in the aftermath of the first US pronouncements in defense of dissent. Thus there is some danger that, even if Sakharov remains untouched, there will be new dissident arrests. Moscow cannot tolerate the impression that it is caving in to American pressures. The Soviets also may fear that the American actions will encourage dissidence. Foreign radio stations, widely heard in the Soviet Union, instantly acquaint politically-minded Soviet citizens with Carter's statements and other US moves supportive of human rights. And all this is happening at a time when political dissidence is again rising in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland and even Rumania in a way that has not been seen in Eastern Europe since 1968.

It is even possible that the US could encourage dissidence in the Soviet empire to a point where it triggers a major crisis. Obviously, the US does not contemplate intervening in Eastern Europe on behalf of an anti-Soviet uprising. So Carter must be extremely careful not to repeat the 1956 experience when the Hungarian "Freedom Fighters" led themselves to believe that the US would actively intervene on their behalf.

The best guess in the administration is that before long the Russians and the Czechoslovaks simply will deport to the West such leading dissidents as Sakharov, Ginzburg and Orlov, and Prague's Vaclav Havel and Ludvik Vaculik. Officials believe this would put a damper on Washington's rhetoric.

Meanwhile, there is a real problem of even-handedness. In order for Carter's policies on human rights to remain credible, he will have to address himself soon to the non-Communist world, including countries that are America's allies. Human rights are violated regularly in Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua, Panama, Iran, South Korea, the Philippines and other pro-US nations. Carter is unlikely to issue a blanket condemnation of all these governments. The policy that appears to be evolving is for the US to speak out on specific instances of human-rights violations; so far the administration has not chosen to seize on any non-Communist cases.

Pressure for morality in friendly countries may be extremely difficult, even though State Department officials say that signals from the White House are absolutely clear. There are any number of apple carts the US does not want to upset. In Brazil (where, according to American officials, repression has been lessening somewhat—although a metal workers union leader recently was tortured to death) the US is engaged in a bitter dispute over nuclear fuel reprocessing plants. Brazil wishes to purchase the equipment from West Germany. The US opposes the sale because it fears the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Brazilians have responded with a great surge of anti-American nationalism. The State Department thinks this is a poor time to give Brazilians hell over human rights. In Panama, we are negotiating a new Canal treaty. Regarding Iran, there is concern that open pressures on human rights issues may lead the Shah to respond violently with his "oil weapon." In the Philippines, the US is involved in difficult military base negotiations. And so it goes around the "free world."

In its pronouncements on Communist countries, the US has a solid legal basis in invoking the Helsinki Act. Elsewhere, it is on weaker international law grounds: the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter itself are the only applicable instruments.

As for the future, US policy regarding human rights in Communist countries is becoming better coordinated between the White House and the State Department. The first statements on Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union were issued by the State Department's European Bureau without being cleared by Vance or Carter. The more recent declarations have been cleared all the way to the top, with the White House increasingly taking over. The administration is expected to go on speaking out against human rights violations in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It will carry this message to Belgrade—in the full awareness of the diplomatic dangers. Carter personally has become so committed on this subject that retrenchment is unlikely.

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Regarding human rights violations by non-Communist countries there is great policy confusion. If not resolved this may lead either to diplomatic chaos or to exaggerated silence that may undercut the positions taken toward the Communists.

One idea under discussion in the administration is to "link" American foreign aid—military and economic—to the human rights performance in the recipient countries. A Mississippi woman named Patt Derian, has been appointed to work with the State Department's Under Secretary for Security Assistance. All foreign aid plans for the fiscal year 1978 are being reviewed from the viewpoint of human rights.

The Carter administration would like the human rights commissions of the UN and the Organization of American States to play a more active role investigating violations and proposing remedial action. The US is prepared to speak out in these forums.

The overriding question, of course, is the extent to which the US can meaningfully protect human rights without damaging its basic foreign policy, or appearing hypocritical and one-sided.

The administration believes that all the current confusion and contradictions can be worked out in time, and that US and international pressures have a constructive effect on the respect for human rights. But very few friendly democratic governments in the world, in and out of NATO, are prepared to support the US in its promised human rights crusade. This is my impression after discussing the subject with a number of foreign diplomats in Washington. Even in the democratic world, the US may find itself as lonely as a moral policeman as it was in the years past as a military policeman.

Tad Szulc

Why a white man may succeed Andy Young.

Realpolitik in Georgia

President Jimmy Carter appointed three members of the US House to his cabinet, and the first tests of America's post-election voter sentiment will be in special elections held to fill those vacancies. The most interesting of those contests will be held in Jimmy Carter's home state, where the seat vacated by the President's most famous supporter, the Rev. Andrew Young, now US ambassador to the United Nations, is up for grabs.

Georgia's 5th was the first deep South district to send a black to Congress since Reconstruction. Circumstances surrounding the battle to succeed him suggest that Young's hold on this electorate was a remarkable, and perhaps unique, political achievement.

It took Andy Young two tries to win. In 1970, he lost to a two-term reactionary Republican named Fletcher Thompson, who admitted he had not met with a black group during four years in office. Urbane, ever conciliatory in manner, Young managed a narrow victory two years later, then consolidated quickly and was reelected twice winning more than two-thirds of the vote each time. "Andy Young made this a showcase black district in the public mind," says State Sen. Julian Bond, "but if it hadn't been for him, this district would still have a white congressman and we couldn't even be thinking about running a black."

Among the dozen or so candidates who have announced they will plunk down the $1338 filing fee before February 28 in an effort to succeed Young, there are four—two blacks and two whites—regarded as potentially strong enough to make the runoff or determine who does.

John Lewis, 36, a civil rights leader and former chairman of SNCC (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) who has directed the Voter Education Project, a registration effort that has added six million Southern blacks to the voter rolls in recent years, is the front-runner among black candidates.

Wych Fowler, 36, presently is president of Atlanta's city council, an at-large post he won with 70 percent of the vote. Fowler's obvious voter appeal and his open feuds with Atlanta's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, make him something of a white hope among Democrats.

Paul Coverdell, 38, the only Republican in the field, is a soft-spoken, four-term moderate state senator with a reputation for good constituency relations and an ability to be reelected by ever-increasing margins in a largely Democratic city.

Ralph David Abernathy succeeded Martin Luther King, Jr., as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He resigned that post, he says, because the slain civil rights leader had predicted a political career for him and he recently got divine instructions confirming that now was the time.

There are others in the race as well. Marge Thurman, chairman of the state Democratic party; two black state representatives, Henrietta Canty and J.E. "Billy" McKinney, each with a strong local constituency; and, of course, the Rev. Clennon King, who achieved national prominence when he unsuccessfully attempted to join Jimmy Carter's Plains Baptist Church just before the November election. None of the eight or nine extras has a chance to win, but each will draw some votes away from the major contenders.

Who does succeed Young will be determined in part by the rules of the game. Exercising his discretion under the Georgia election code, Governor George Busbee has declared that for the special election there will be no primaries—only a bed-sheet ballot, non-partisan free-for-all with a runoff to be held three weeks later in the likely event that no candidate wins a

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majority in the first go-round. Eliminating a primary, Busbee reasoned, would speed up the process and save the state money.

Georgia is one of the few states that requires an absolute majority vote for federal elections. In 1971, Julian Bond and Andy Young joined up in a lawsuit to have this provision overturned. They argued that not allowing plurality victories forced blacks into one-on-one runoffs in white-majority congressional districts. A panel of three federal judges, including Griffin Bell, rejected their petition saying that such a discriminatory effect could not be substantiated before it actually occurred. The court gratuitously added that the law could not have been drawn with any intent to discriminate because at the time of its original adoption, blacks did not have the right to vote in Georgia. In fact, the majority requirement with provision for a runoff was first used at the end of the Reconstruction period, and the intent was precisely to diminish black representation. Partly because of the existence of party primaries, however, its effect has never been as obvious as in the upcoming special election.

Busbee's decision that the contest will be non-partisan has increased the importance of the district's racial demography. Atlanta (53 percent black) has a reputation for being the most progressive city in the South, with what Andy Young calls the "most sophisticated black leadership in the country." Young's old district is 58 percent white; but after the usual minimum one-third Republican vote is subtracted, a Democratic primary normally could be counted on to produce a black winner. In this case, it would have been John Lewis. Without partisan primaries, however, the March 15 election in effect will be a racial primary with about 95 percent of whites and a like proportion of blacks choosing from their own race.

The most obvious beneficiary of this arrangement is Wych Fowler, who can aspire to be the white candidate in a white-black run-off in a white-majority constituency. As the district's best-known candidate, Fowler appears well positioned for the first election, with its short campaign and low expected turnout. There are no issues to distinguish the candidates, so Fowler is running as the man with experience at both stops on the line: Washington, where he was a congressional aide for three years; and Atlanta, where he is completely familiar with local government. "Everything we do in cities these days," says Fowler, "is merely implementing congressional policy." Fowler is regarded as talented, an effective campaigner, and plenty ambitious, with his mind on Congress for a long time. He challenged Andy Young unsuccessfully in the 1972 primary. He is said to be the only member of Atlanta's city council with a foreign policy. Fowler has the only poll so far, taken before the other candidates began active campaigning, and showing him with good name recognition and a positive image, and which he is using to raise the $75,000 he needs for 10 days of saturation television at the end. Most of Fowler's money comes from "Downtown," an Atlanta euphemism to describe the moderate, white business and professional establishment.

Paul Coverdell, the Republican, believes Fowler is the front-runner only because he is already well known. As Coverdell sees it, Fowler has no natural constituency and his support is soft. Whatever black vote he had in the early poll will erode to John Lewis, and he must compete for white support in an area where Coverdell has been reelected three times with majorities of up to 80 percent, and where even Gerald Ford got 60 percent of the vote against local-boy Jimmy Carter. The Republican National Committee believes that Andy Young's seat in Jimmy Carter's backyard is a prize worth competing for, and already has sent help in the form of two political advisers for Coverdell. To overcome low recognition outside his own state senate district—about a quarter of the congressional district—Coverdell bought an early wave of television spots billing himself "the Republican we can all support." His strategy is simple—consolidate the predominantly white, affluent, suburban and republican votes.

"I'm running for my life," says John Lewis, and that is a reasonable assessment. Lewis, presumed by many outside Georgia to be the natural heir to Andy Young's seat, is shy, unassuming, a man *Time* once called a "saint among us." But sainthood and politicking are not a comfortable mix, and Lewis remains an uncharismatic and ineffective campaigner. Young provides a constant frame of reference. As one of his supporters puts it, John Lewis is blacker than Andy Young in color, in background, in manner and in idiom. "Atlanta proved it was ready for the urbane son of a New Orleans dentist. How about the son of an Alabama sharecropper?" After weeks of doldrums, Lewis only recently has assembled an effective campaign organization under the direction of an outsider, Marvin Chernoff, the wizard who managed Pug Ravenal's (subsequently disallowed) gubernatorial victory in South Carolina.

Money has been a problem for Lewis. Senator Edward Kennedy flew to Atlanta for a breakfast; fundraisers have been set for Boston, New York, Washington, Los Angeles and Chicago; but next to nothing has been raised in the district. Early public projections of a $200,000 budget have been cut by more than half. "Atlanta has been drained of political money by Jimmy Carter," says one fundraiser. Until the runoff, organized labor is mostly staying neutral.

Lewis has the endorsements of prominent black leaders like Julian Bond, Martin Luther King, Sr., and Andy Young's wife, Jean. He is ready to use those endorsements in television and radio spots, especially on the "soul stations" which have proved effective in reaching black voters for Young and Maynard Jackson. In a short six-week campaign, there is only one way to overcome voter apathy and low recognition: paid

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media. Lewis has assembled the ingredients for a strong finish. His problem will be finding the money to finance it.

As a favored, front-running black, John Lewis is in the most difficult position of any candidate. His black competitors, proven politicians like McKinney and Canty and the celebrity Abernathy, have more potential to draw off Lewis votes and deny him a spot in the runoff than the minor white candidates have to diminish the votes of Coverdell and Fowler. Lewis supporters regard Abernathy as the greatest potential spoiler. To win in Georgia's 5th district, they reason, a black Democrat must re-create Andy Young's coalition—100 percent of the black vote as a foundation and 15 to 20 percent of the white vote to go over the top. Among the black candidates, they say, only Lewis can assemble that range of support. Ralph David Abernathy can produce only an all-white runoff. Among the voices Abernathy will be hearing in the days ahead are those of old friends suggesting that he withdraw.

None of these men—not Fowler, not Abernathy, not Coverdell, not Lewis—is comfortable with race as the pivotal dimension of the March 15 voting. Fowler, however, is following the highest rolling strategy. As a Democrat, he might naturally expect to inherit most of the black vote in an all-white runoff. But his notable disagreements with Mayor Maynard Jackson already have eroded some of that support. Jackson is immensely popular in the black community, according to Fowler's poll, and almost equally unpopular among whites. Thus Republican Coverdell can reliably expect the support of black leaders like Julian Bond and Billy McKinney if John Lewis does not make the runoff. Also, Fowler is liable to lose further black support by the manner he is consolidating his white base for the first election. Coverdell's staff has intercepted a letter mailed to selected voters on behalf of the Fowler campaign. The letter lays out his strategy pretty clearly. Why should whites vote for Wych in the first go-round? Because in the runoff, a white Democrat can beat a black Democrat, but a white Republican cannot. This is some of the realpolitik behind the battle to choose a successor to the Rev. Andrew Young.

Ken Bode

South of the Border: I

Guatemala Beyond Bananas

By Stephen Kinzer

The boy with the wood is the best representative of this stricken land. He is perhaps seven years old, and he walks beside the road, a few steps behind his father, carrying a load of firewood that seems twice his size. The wood is bundled together by a worn rope, which the boy supports by running it across his forehead. He has no shoes and no schooling; he probably will never have either.

That boy is lucky to be alive in this land where more than half of all deaths are of children under four. But his future is not bright. He is unlikely to reach his 50th birthday. He is part of the 70 percent of the Guatemalan population that earns an average annual income of $42. He is part of the 63 percent of the population here that never will learn to read or write. His diet is worse than that of his pre-Columbian Mayan ancestors. And, like almost all of the Indians and poor Ladinos (people with Spanish blood) who are the majority here, and like their ancestors for 15 generations, he probably will live largely outside the political system and the cash economy.

That boy will spend his life, as his father has spent his, eking out a bare subsistence from a rocky patch of land in Guatemala's central *altiplano*. Eighty percent of his caloric intake will be corn. He will have to pay the owner of the land in labor or with a portion of his crop, and to support his family he probably will have to travel to the lush Pacific coast each winter to work on the large coffee and sugar plantations for one dollar a day.

Land is the transcendant issue in Guatemala, as it always has been. One percent of the population here owns nearly 80 percent of the land. Lack of land has consigned most of the population to a centuries-old cycle of poverty and dependence. Guatemala is a classic

Stephen Kinzer writes for Pacific News Service. This is the first of several reports by different writers on countries in Latin America.

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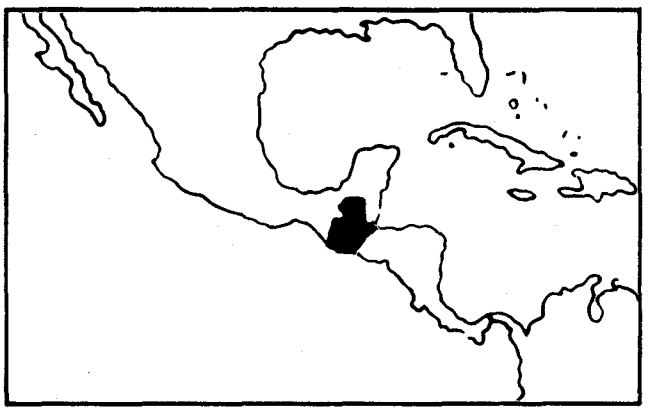

example in the familiar pattern of unequal land distribution in Latin America. A few wealthy families—"the twenty four"—and a handful of multinational companies have a vice-like hold on the politics and economy of the country. The armed forces serve as their guarantors.

For 10 years, from 1944 to 1954, Guatemala experimented with land reform. Under the nationalist regimes of Juan Jose Arevalo and Jacobo Arbenz, about 100,000 peasant families received land that had been expropriated from plantation owners and foreign interests, who were letting it lie fallow to limit the food supply and maintain high prices. But because some of that land belonged to American firms, such as the United Fruit Company, the "October Revolution," as it is still called here, was doomed to failure. On June 18, 1954, a coup led by Gen. Carlos Castillo Armas and organized by the US Central Intelligence Agency overthrew the Arbenz regime, which it regarded as a tool of the Kremlin, and installed in its place a rightist military government that has survived, in various incarnations, to this day.

The government of Guatemala is a curious mixture of nascent democracy and old-fashioned banana-republic dictatorship. The real power lies with the small upper class and the military, as it has for decades, but democratic currents persist. The press is relatively free, deputies in the National Congress are free to debate (though without much real effect), works by Marx and Che Guevara are freely available, and ordinary citizens are at least theoretically free to criticize the government. But there is no independent judiciary, political parties must register with the government (four now exist), and election results are not considered sacred. Organizing of any sort is frowned upon. There are no real labor or peasant movements, outside of those sanctioned by the military.

The random political violence that haunts Guatemala, so frightening to outsiders, seems almost accepted by natives. There is no real guerilla war going on here, as in nearby Nicaragua, and there are no battle lines. But murders and kidnappings are routine. One Guatemalan journalist seemed to take genuine pride in telling a visitor that it has been almost a year since a congressman has been assassinated.

Most of the 61 members of the unicameral Congress are wealthy ranchers and businessmen. Many are unofficially affiliated with one or another of the dozens of private armies, death squads and paramilitary groups that terrorize the political scene. Most walk around routinely with armed bodyguards, ostensibly to protect themselves against their enemies. The result is that small-time barroom arguments often become deadly free-for-alls.

Kidnappings have evolved from a strictly political tactic to a simple means of making money. Many are attributed to groups backing certain political factions, but little can be done about them because of the power those factions wield. The government's pathetic "Down With Violence" campaign seems especially hopeless in light of its inability to control even the forces of the right which are its own political base. Although it always remains unsaid, of course, an interviewer talking to political leaders here cannot help but wonder which will still be alive by election time in 1978.

Since the overthrow of Arbenz in 1954, elections have been held with moderate regularity, and sometimes the results have been respected. The year 1974 was not such an occasion.

The government of extreme rightist Carlos Arana Osorio, whose supporters have been linked to kidnappings and murders here, put together a coalition of the right behind the candidacy of 44-year-old Gen. Kjell Laugerud Garcia, a non-politician who was considered reliable because of his strictly military background. The Christian Democrats and their mostly outlawed allies backed another general, Efrain Rios Montt, who was considered a representative of progressive elements in the military—virtually the only progressive force besides the Christian Democrats allowed to function here.

On election night, as it became clear that Rios Montt was winning, the Arana government suddenly halted all reporting of statistics. Radio and television stations could broadcast no figures. After a delay of some 18 hours, it was curtly announced that Gen. Laugrud had won.

Although he has followed a fairly orthodox conservative policy over the last two years, Laugerud has proven less pliable than his predecessor had hoped. He has not tampered with the political and social structure of the country nor posed any real threat to the ruling oligarchy. But his support for the rural cooperative movement and for mild tax reform has frightened some of his backers. His vice president, Mario Sandoval Alarcon, leader of the ultra-right Movement of National Liberation, has linked Laugerud with international communism.

Jockeying for position for the 1978 presidential election is already well underway, quickened by the

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general view that Laugerud, unlike his predecessor, will be inclined to respect the results. The Christian Democrats, who represent the "legal left," are fully aware that they need only hold their votes of two years ago to win. Since the social and economic condition of the country has, if anything, worsened since then, they are confident that they can do that. The Christian Democrats here, because they are the only legally recognized party that offers a liberal alternative, have attracted many followers who might otherwise be in more radical parties. As a result the party here is clearly more leftist than its counterparts in Europe and elsewhere.

The candidate chosen by the Christian Democrats must be able to satisfy three conditions. First, he must be popular enough to win support from leaders of as many factions as possible. Second, he must be able to generate enough popular support to guarantee victory at the polls. And finally, he must not scare the military so much that they refuse to let him take office.

If opposition leaders decide that they can fill this bill with a civilian—a risky proposition—he will almost certainly be Rene de Leon, the venerable founder and senior figure of the Christian Democratic party here and secretary general of the world Christian Democratic movement. If they decide to run a military man, he will be either Gen. Rios Montt, who won the last election and is now a military attache in Spain, or Gen. Ricardo Peraltz Mendez, a liberal officer who has been very visible as director of the national earthquake reconstruction effort.

The Christian Democratic platform will be much as it was in 1974, advocating free unionization, agrarian reform, respect for legal institutions, nationalization of energy industries, changes in the tax structure, and "better distribution of wealth." But liberal politicians are wary of going too far; they remember the 1974 election and the 1954 coup, and also are uneasy about whether the United States will allow serious change in Latin America.

"The American ambassador in 1954 said that his country could not permit the establishment of a so-called 'Marxist state' between Texas and the Panama Canal," said one politician. "Have you changed that policy? How can we be sure? We remember Chile, you know."

One who would like to be a presidential candidate but probably will not be allowed to is Manuel Colom Argueta, a popular leftist who served as mayor of Guatemala City from 1970 to 1974. His party, the United Revolutionary Front (FUR), is probably the strongest and best organized of those not officially recognized by the government. Because of its unofficial status, the FUR cannot participate in elections at any level.

"Repression, coercion and persecution have destroyed democratic life in Guatemala," Colom said at his comfortable home near the university, where he teaches urban affairs. "Our best comrades have been assassinated. We live in a continuing blood bath that has its origins in the arbitrary exercise of power by the oligarchy which rules Guatemala.

"For intellectuals, there are three courses open. First, there is self-exile; many of the most prominent professors in Mexico are Guatemalan. Second, there is silence enforced by fear. And third, there is the option of continuing struggle, which often means paying for your ideals with your life."

Colom knows whereof he speaks. On a quiet afternoon last March, a squad of attackers opened fire on him as he walked on a street near his home. Because a passing school bus gave him precious seconds to flee, he escaped with wounds in the shoulder and neck.

Whoever the candidates are, the 1978 election will be close to a rerun of the 1974 contest. The military, therefore, remains the imponderable. And even if the center-left coalition is victorious and is allowed to take office, it will remain vulnerable to a military coup any time it steps over that very ill-defined line between what is permissible and what is not.

One area in which the liberals do not hesitate to advocate change is Guatemalan foreign policy, which is considered so pro-American that Guatemala was invited not to attend the recent nonaligned conference in Sri Lanka. "We are now ostracized from the community of nations with whom we have the most in common because our policy is basically just anti-communism and strict adherence to whatever the United States wants," explained one opposition congressman. Guatemala has never had much of a foreign policy. Her only real international involvement in recent decades was providing bases for the anti-Castro Cubans who participated in the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Besides reflexive pro-Americanism, the only important theme in Guatemalan foreign policy has been a long-running and quixotic campaign to assert sovereignty over neighboring Belize, the former British Honduras. The dispute dates back to 1859, when a treaty was signed between newly independent Guatemala and Britain, whose privateers had sought refuge in Belize over the years and whose traders had brought slaves there to work in logging camps. The treaty gave Britain sovereignty over the territory in a rather vague way in exchange for a British promise, also vague, to build a road linking Guatemala City to the Caribbean.

The British never took the treaty seriously, and never built the road. Guatemalans claim that the treaty is void and that Belize is rightfully theirs. Successive Guatemalan regimes have recognized the value of the issue as a diversion from the nation's more pressing problems. The 1944 Guatemalan Constitution officially incorporated Belize, and all maps printed in Guatemala show Belize as part of the national territory. Bumper stickers throughout the country urge

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Polar Words

There are certain peculiar words that by themselves have no meaning. They can be used only in relation to their opposites. The word "up" has no meaning apart from the word "down," nor the term "fast" apart from the term "slow." Such words are responsible for much of the confusion, and most of the heat, in human discourse.

An Assistant U.S. Attorney General, the late Thurman Arnold, used to call them *polar* words and warned against many of the traps they set for us. As commonly used, he observed, words like "justice" and "injustice" are typical polar terms:

A reformer who wants to abolish injustice and create a world in which nothing but justice prevails is like a man who wants to make everything "up." Such a man might feel that if he took the lowest in the world and carried it up to the highest point and kept on doing this, everything would eventually become "up." This would certainly move a great many objects and create an enormous amount of activity. It might or might not be useful, according to the standards which we apply. However, it would never result in the abolishment of "down."

In so stating, the author placed himself in peril of being found insensitive to the cause of justice—"insensitive," of course, being still another common entry in the polar sweepstakes. So, for that matter, is the term "efficiency," which is a common ideal of business but has no meaning unless there exists something called "inefficiency." One does not become an advocate of inefficiency merely by pointing this out, although, remarkably enough, there are those who may vaguely suspect as much.

For many people, even to discuss certain words in these terms arouses a dim sense of misgiving. The reason for this reaction is that polar words are our battle ensigns, and it is our instinct to defend the flag under which we march. The words are not guides to rational decision making, nor even to winning debates. They never succeed in persuading the other side, but are primarily morale boosters for the side on which they are used. "The trick," as Arnold observed, "is to find a pair of polar words in which the nice word justifies your own position and the bad word is applied to the other fellow."

Yet most of us choose our own favorite words with no intention of being tricky or deceptive. We genuinely believe in the rightness of our cause—and therefore that only the "nice" words apply to it.

In the continuing debate over crime, for example, those who believe that the courts have become too lenient are heard to say: "We must show more concern for the victim and less for the criminal." To which another group retorts that "the criminal himself is a victim of the social conditions that breed crime." No one expects such an argument to result in a revised, rational code of criminal justice. It does help each disputant to feel that he is on the

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side of the victim, which is, of course, the "right" side. Unfortunately, it is no help to the judge.

Judges are not alone. Hardly anyone in government, business or the professions escapes being regularly trapped in the cross fire of polarized debate. We all have our own checklists.

A shift in the economy may abruptly transform "investors" into "speculators," and "skinflint bankers" into "reckless lenders" of other people's money. An approaching election usually turns our "statesmen" into "politicians," and afterwards the winners must begin the slow process of rehabilitation—until next time. A widely publicized and unpopular court decision converts the lawyers' "due process" to "legal technicalities." And a "dedicated civil servant" may be converted to a "government bureaucrat" and back again several times in a single day—especially at tax time.

In an American election year, the polar words normally float on the horizon like the aurora borealis. They then subside, but never vanish. Nor should we want them to. Such words do, after all, have power to inspire. They provide focal points around which like-minded citizens can rally. They motivate change and social progress.

We would do well to remember, however, that polar words are never guides to reasonable solutions or rational goals. They can make us want to move, but never tell us where we ought to go. For this, we need a different kind of dialogue.

"Like three impressions of the same seal, the word ought to produce the idea, and the idea ought to be a picture of the fact." So wrote Antoine Lavoisier in the late eighteenth century. Applying this precept to his own field, he sat down and compiled the dictionary that revolutionized the science of chemistry and earned him immortality as the Father of Modern Chemistry. The event is often cited as proof of what clear and careful definition can accomplish. It is unfortunate for the cause of clarity (as it was for him) that a few years later, when Lavoisier applied himself to politics, they cut off his head.

The only safety for which the objective observer can hope, perhaps, is to be reminded occasionally that words can be extremely dangerous—and especially the ones that come in pairs.

Lying between these polar battle lines is a vast and dimly lighted no-man's-land where one may occasionally encounter a fragment of fact or a particle of truth. This usually occurs, however, only when the searchers are willing to leave the magic words and rallying cries shimmering awhile in the distance, awaiting some future call to arms. The months immediately following a national election are often good times for such missions. In fact, they may be the *only* times.

It would be a shame to waste them.

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"Guatemalans: Remember, Belize is Yours."

All this has been considered something of a joke by the British, who have granted limited independence to Belize while maintaining a military garrison there as a sign of continuing commitment. The third-world nations have overwhelmingly supported Belizean independence on the grounds of national self-determination and have roundly condemned Guatemala for pressing her historically valid but nonetheless seemingly hopeless claim.

One Guatemalan professional expressed the common view of his countrymen this way: "Of course Belize is ours, but when you consider how little we have been able to develop the Peten (Guatemala's huge jungle area that borders Belize), what on earth would we do with it?" Belize is really a domestic, rather than international, issue here. But the Guatemalan government will not let the matter die. Indeed, after so many years of incessant propaganda, no Guatemalan politician can safely advocate letting Belize go her own way, if only because he would alienate the military men who depend on the issue.

Gen. Otto Spiegler, the army chief with presidential ambitions, has established a special military camp near the Belize border where volunteers are given a rigorous eight-week course in jungle warfare and use of the Israeli weapons that are the mainstay of the armed forces here. Recently, President Laugerud visited the border area and declared that the day was coming when he would ask Guatemalan youth "to cut their hair and put on helmets . . . and take up arms to claim what legitimately belongs to us." Foreign Minister Adolfo Molino takes a softer line privately, but local observers continue to worry about a Guatemalan action that could bring the redcoats into Belize and start another Nothern Ireland-type confrontation.

The military's other main concern is guerilla activity, which has been sporadic over the last two decades. After an unsuccessful coup by young officers in 1960, several leaders fled to the countryside and began a rural insurgency campaign that lasted nearly a decade. As recently as the late 1960s, the guerillas were operating relatively openly. They conducted literacy classes and challenged local soccer teams to well attended matches. A visiting journalist could take a guerilla to lunch for an update.

After a drawn-out counter-insurgency campaign succeeded only in further alienating the peasants, the Guatemalan government under Gen. Arana Osorio declared a national state of siege in 1970. In the first weeks of the emergency, troops surrounded the capital city and allowed no one in or out while a house-to-house search was conducted. The number of "desaparecidos"—the disappeared—was almost 5000. These 5000—mostly students, labor organizers and peasant activists—included the approximately 500 members of the guerilla movement, which was effectively crushed.

Over the last three years, the main organized opposition to the government has taken the form of strikes, including national walkouts by teachers and hospital personnel. Last spring, a strike at the Coca-Cola plant (which seems to have replaced United Fruit as a symbol of American presence here) attracted wide student support as well as expressions of support from other workers. The strike, over the right to organize, was successful.

A year ago a new guerilla group, the Guerilla Army of the Poor (EGP), surfaced. Its first action was the assassination of a right-wing deputy whom it accused of being responsible for the death of several student leaders. Since then, it has taken responsibility for several acts of sabotage, mainly the burning of large farms near the Pacific coast. The farm burnings are beginning to cause visible damage to the national economy. In response, the government has renewed its efforts to combat the guerillas, including aerial bombing of several villages earlier this year.

There is no way of knowing how strong the guerilla group is, because it is operating secretively and has no visible leadership. Its internal discipline is evident in the communiques (bearing the portrait of Che Guevara) it issues after every action, which specify in detail why the action was undertaken. But the rural peasants are not likely to rise up and join their urban counterparts in violent revolution. The essentially non-violent nature of the Indians and their tradition-shrouded history make it very difficult for them to think of taking up arms against a government they consider quite distant and which many of them barely acknowledge.

In towns like Chimaltenango, 50 miles northwest of the capital, the cemeteries are full and overflowing. Row after row of freshly dug graves are marked with colorful flowers and simple crosses bearing names of buried villagers and the notation "Died February 4, 1976."

The earthquake that struck Guatemala on that day left 22,000 dead and 55,000 injured. In Chimaltenango, a provinicial capital near the center of the quake, about one of every 15 residents died. In Guatemala City, the poorest areas were destroyed, while the wealthy neighborhoods were almost unscathed. Some 200,000 people flooded the city in search of immediate help, only to be told that they must return home and wait for government aid to reach them there. More than 50 percent of the housing in the capital was destroyed, and in many outlying towns not even a single wall was left standing.

In the countryside, where damage was most severe, the reconstruction work is slow. But each day, progress is made—in contrast to some other countries, where aid never reaches those most in need. Natural disasters are about the only way nations like Guatemala ever make the front pages abroad, except for occasional

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revolutions. As a result, well over $100 million in foreign aid has been sent or pledged by foreign governments and private agencies, led by $25 million appropriated by the US Congress.

The Guatemalan government also is contributing, within its modest resources. President Laugerud has estimated that the task will take 10 years and cost one billion dollars, and he has tried to use reconstruction as a way to improve the general condition of the nation, rather than just put it back together.

Observers here predict that government spending on earthquake relief will increase sharply as the 1978 election approaches. In the meantime, the Laugerud government has tried to impose some order on international relief efforts, assigning certain countries to specific projects or geographical areas. The aid is being channelled through special local reconstruction committees which largely bypass the established political structure. If these committees continue to function successfully, they may prove to be the basis for continuing development here. The regime apparently has made a concerted effort to keep corruption and embezzlement down to a reasonable level. Authorities are well aware of the situation in nearby Nicaragua, where the ruling Somoza family and its collaborators reportedly reaped huge profits after the 1972 earthquake there by selling donated supplies on the black market and channelling construction contracts to family-owned concerns.

Guatemala City, where about 20 percent of the nation's five million people live, is not an especially attractive place. Its climate is moderate, owing to its altitude; but that is its major positive attribute.

The downtown area is an environmental disaster. The streets are narrow and perpetually clogged. Pollution is even worse than a New Yorker could imagine. The noise of the cars, buses and hordes of motorcycles is unceasing. Adding to the disquiet is the presence of soldiers armed with rifles and submachine guns guarding banks and office buildings.

On every street corner, portable stands sell Chiclets, Life Savers, taffy and other sweets. In between corners sidewalk vendors hawk sunglasses, wallets, belts, mirrors and all sorts of trinkets. The blind, the elderly and the cripples sit in doorways begging for the coins that are their only hope for survival. "Oh, you are so young," wailed a toothless old woman with a look of impenetrable despair at a passing visitor. "Can't you help me with just a penny?"

The countryside is a sharp contrast, as visitors to this "land of eternal spring" know well. Guatemala must rank as one of the world's best-endowed scenic spots. When the natural beauty of the country is combined with the special attractions of the Mayan ruins that dot the countryside, it is not difficult to understand why tourists have favored Guatemala.

Tourists brought $85 million to Guatemala last year, quite a small sum compared to the potential. The government recognizes the special economic advantages of tourism, and has targeted three spots for intensive development: the spectacular Mayan ruins at Tikal and the surrounding Peten jungle, the area around Lake Atitlan, which Aldous Huxley once called "the most beautiful lake in the world," and the almost completely undeveloped Izabal region near the Caribbean coast.

Guatemala's economy seems, by conventional standards, to be in relatively good shape. Agricultural production has been successfully diversified, with coffee, cotton and sugar now actually leading bananas as producers of foreign exchange. Industry is being lured here by what the government has called an "ideal investment climate" which includes a large labor pool, no unions to speak of, low wages, tax incentives and very few regulations over pollution or other bothersome inconveniences.

The only oil yet found in Central America is in Guatemala, near the Mexican border. No significant production has yet begun, but the Texas-based Shenandoah Company is planning a 90-mile pipeline from the oilfields to the Caribbean, and hopes to produce up to 25 percent of the nation's needs within a few years. Presently, Guatemala imports all her oil from Venezuala at a cost of $150 million per year.

After 10 years of preparatory work, a US-Canadian combine called EXMIBAL will finally begin operation of a large nickel mine this spring. The facility, at El Estor near the Caribbean, will be the largest metallurgical and mining concern in Central America, mining a projected 28 million tons of 75 percent pure nickel annually. Like its oil and agricultural counterparts, EXMIBAL will inevitably contribute to the national economy, though its foreign owners probably will do better here than they could hope to do in nations with more nationalistic governments.

One obvious source of revenue, outside of income taxes on the wealthy, would be the imposition of taxes on agricultural exports. In 1972, a group of Latin countries tried to band together to form UBEC, the Union of Banana Exporting Countries, in an effort to force concessions from the foreign firms that control agriculture in the region. UBEC's first project was to impose a one-dollar-per-box tax on banana exports. But the plan fell through because the member nations, mostly under right-wing dictatorships, could not sustain unity in the face of pressure from corporations. Panama imposed the full one-dollar tax. Guatemala imposed a 44-cent levy after bitter debate.

But none of these efforts to uplift the formal economy, whether successful or failures, will affect the boy with the wood. "You have to understand," said one opposition politician, "that here the figures mean very little because they are only relevant to that small part of our population—perhaps a third—which is part of our national economy."

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Arts & Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Fellini's Casanova

(Universal)

Federico Fellini's career falls so neatly into two periods that it's almost as if he had planned it for the convenience of critics. In the first period, from 1950 to 1956, he made neorealist films, about the poor and exploited of postwar Italy. Then there was a pause of four years, after which he began to make ornate films about ornate people. Each phase produced one very fine work, *I Vitelloni* in the first and *Amarcord* in the second. And in Phase Two he also made one of the world's film masterpieces, *8½*.

But Phase Two is subdivided. *8½* and *Amarcord* are autobiographical, and so is his affecting sentimental film *The Clowns*. When he strayed from close sources of self, he faltered. *La Dolce Vita* and *Roma*, which were only indirectly or tenuously autobiographical, were strained and weak. When he moved into the completely imaginative and spectacular *Satyricon*, the result was vacuous. (I'm ignoring the short episodes he made for anthology films.) Now he has made another non-autobiographical, imaginative film, another spectacle, and it's the closest to a completely boring work that Fellini has done.

The original book promised boredom. I've read only the one-volume condensation of Casanova's lengthy memoirs, hardly a literary gauge, but condensations normally select high spots, and if that volume is the highs, there must be a wilderness of lows. The next bad news was the casting of Donald Sutherland as Casanova. I've sometimes admired Sutherland—incidentally, in *Alex in Wonderland* he played an admiring film director who visits Fellini—but the choice of this actor for Casanova suggested that Fellini was planning a series of fabrications, beginning with makeup. The first publicity stills confirmed that Sutherland was having a new face built every day of shooting. Fellini said he wanted a non-face on which to build. However, Fellini did not build on Sutherland's non-style of acting to take it out of graceless anachronism.

And then came the publicity squibs that Fellini had sought out the world's tallest woman and the woman with the biggest bosom. (The latter doesn't appear in the finished film.) These stories didn't do a whole lot to raise expectation.

Still it was too great. *Casanova* is a disjointed set of dreary episodes, which could have been expanded or contracted, which have only occasional glimmers of visual richness, and which move to a heavily predicted conclusion that takes two and three-quarter hours to arrive.

Behind the opening credits we see water—a Venetian canal, as we learn. This, like some other elements, seems included to nudge the symbolical analysts of Fellini's work. Many have noted the recurrence of water in his films, usually the sea, and right away water is ticked off. The camera pulls back to disclose a nocturnal carnival, and the picture also discloses some burdens that it never shakes. First, darkness. The sun is never seen in this film. Daylight scenes (shot in studios) are misty; brightly lit interiors are never really bright. Then there is the failed lavishness; the spectacle is never as ingenious as it was in *Satyricon*. Third, the camera movement and editing, which have so often been exquisite in Fellini, are dull and commonplace. Last, the sound-track, which is in English. (There's an Italian track for Italy and, I guess, other languages as well.) The dialogue is sometimes incomprehensible, is often erratically synchronized with lips, and is usually in one plane, as against the several planes of the picture we're looking at. In general the sound-track of this film is like a layer of saran-wrap between us and the screen.

At the carnival a masked reveler is given a note. It's Casanova, and the note invites him to a rendezvous with a young nun whom he has never met. He keeps the date and makes love to her in a quasi-chapel under the gaze of her older lover who watches through the eye of a painting—of a fish. (So Fellini's anti-clericalism and fish symbolism are ticked off.) Casanova has brought with him a music box surmounted by a mechanical bird. He sets it going to accompany the lovemaking, and while the music tinkles, the bird rises and flaps its wings. This, shall we say, unsubtle symbol accompanies many of his couplings.

Further episodes include: the bedding of a mystical old woman with whom Casanova is able to perform only by having a young woman in the room to wag her rump at him; a one-hour copulation contest at a party in which Casanova outdoes a husky young coachman; an encounter with a life-size doll (echoing Olympia in *Tales of Hoffmann*) to which he whispers the same trite endearments as to live women and which he leaves in the prone position of mechanical recipient; his old age and humiliation in a latrine; and a last dream on the frozen canal of the first scene in which he dances again with the doll. These selected descriptions may make the film seem more interesting than it is. Each episode, these and others, is handled maladroitly and tends to a wearisome simplistic moral: Casanova, otherwise gifted, has brutalized himself with animality and with self-deceptions about it. He thinks he is a poetic amorist; he is a brutish sensualist.

The joylessness is underscored by the lighting throughout. Even the gloom isn't good gloom. Giuseppe Rotunno's camera does adequately, not stunningly, and if a film like this doesn't stun, it fails utterly. Only one image seemed to me memorable—in a deserted theater (of course in a Fellini film there's a theatrical performance) when the chandeliers are being extinguished. Danilo Donati, who designed the sets and costumes of this film and of *Satyricon*, is not in a class with the late Piero Gherardi, who did *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*. Nino Rota, who has written the music for every Fellini feature film, has composed his first charmless score. Bernardino Zapponi collaborated on the script with Fellini, as he did on *Satyricon*. It's worth noting

Films Worth Seeing

Harlan County U.S.A. Barbara Kopple's strong documentary of a coal miners' strike 1973—moving and authentically American.

The Marquise of O . . . Eric Rohmer's fine film (his first in German) from Kleist's great story.

Network. Suspend your disbelief and enjoy Paddy Chayefsky's razzle-dazzle about TV power-plays. Well acted and directed.

The Seven-per-cent-Solution. Sherlock Holmes, Sigmund Freud, bright dialogue and polished acting. Enough?

SK

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that Zapponi did not work on the intervening and immeasurably superior *Amarcord*.

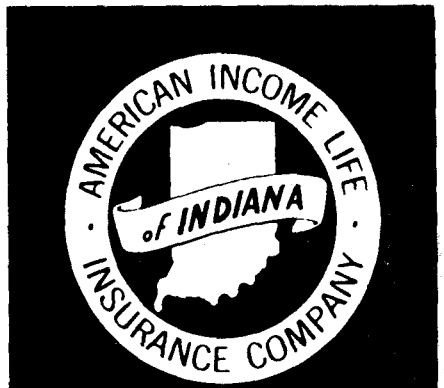
None of the performances can be discussed as such. Some of the faces—not Sutherland's false face—are striking, but few of the women are attractive. The giantess, Sandra Elaine Allen, is wasted; for all we see of her, in drapes, Fellini could have used a man—on stilts.

In the 17 years that he has been world-famous and widely discussed, Fellini has liked to tease interviewers and commentators. Theatrical personality that he is, he has enjoyed attention at the same time that, artist that he is, he has wanted to defend his privacy and has disliked attempts to analyze and label his work. Remember the bucket that falls over his head in *The Clowns* when he begins to "interpret." Well, much of the obtrusive symbolism in *Casanova* seems a put-on. Perhaps in defense-through-exaggeration, he has boasted of the sterility of Casanova and also of *Casanova*. But as in many jokes he has possibly told more truth than he wanted to tell.

When Fellini became successful, much of his work moved away from his early experience and from the contemporary experience out of which he had been creating. He himself moved into a new social environment, in itself as valid a source of art as any other (see Antonioni) but which he was unable really to assimilate. He could only watch and be impressed. In *La Dolce Vita* he is like a gifted rube reporter of naughty High Life. *Satyricon* has the same bumpkin's awe of sin and *luxe* transported to antiquity. And this persists in *Casanova*.

Since the great divide, his best films have been about *himself* in this new world, directly (*8½*) or indirectly (*Juliet of the Spirits*) or, again, about his past (*Amarcord, The Clowns*). The crucial question is: Is there anything left in Fellini for Fellini to film, either in his past or in his present? He is the epitome of the romantic artist. Observation and synthesis are not his mode: it must have happened to *him* before he can transmute it into art. If *Casanova*, the very choice of *Casanova*, can be read in any illuminating way, it's as a confession, almost trusting confession, of emptiness.

In gratitude for what Fellini has done, it's the moment to repay that trust, not to excoriate or sneer. It's the moment to insist on hoping.



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Earthbound and Sublime

Two Exhibitions

With a pinch of routine Bicentennial patriotic sentiment, a dash of specious art historical speculation combined with two lumpy contradictory concepts of pictorial content, a batch of admirable but incompatible visual examples to flesh out the abstract theories—all mixed together with a sovereign disregard for the innate qualities and meanings of these ingredients—the staff of the Museum of Modern Art put together the recipe for a mish-mash of an exhibition called "The Natural Paradise: Painting in America 1800-1950," recently on display in New York.

Thomas Moran's monumental painting of the Grand Canyon, placed on axis opposite the entrance to the museum, greeted the visitor with a pictorial evocation of awesome cliffs, chasms, mists and light. This image aroused expectations of further visionary landscapes of the American "Natural Paradise," but instead, the first sight in the d'Harnoncourt wing of the museum was the spectacle of a large gallery filled with abstract expressionist paintings. Such an odd juxtaposition seemed to call for curatorial explanation, and that was amply supplied.

In this case, curator Kynaston McShine relied heavily on Robert Rosenblum's *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition* to provide the theoretical underpinnings for his show. Rosenblum's book is an ingenious, entertaining and unconvincing document that employs, as the author sensibly admits in his preface, certain "subtle and perhaps unsubtle historical distortions." However, when McShine attempted to present an American exhibition to prove the Rosenblum thesis, without benefit of supportive European examples, he not only ran afoul of the historical distortions, he also

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had to contend with the recalcitrant character of the individual works on display.

McShine's thesis was that American painting between 1800 and 1950 followed an inevitable development based on shared creative aspirations that were "romantic, transcendental and intent on the sublime." He maintained that the vast unspoiled American wilderness and the writings of Emerson and Thoreau encouraged such ambitions, that the influences of European artists as diverse as Constable, Monet, Cézanne, Picasso and Kandinsky were all adapted to our steadfast national passion for the "spiritual and heroic," and that these aspirations finally reached fulfillment in the 20th century through abstract and metaphorical means in "an incomparable achievement of sublimity exemplified in the work of Arshile Gorky, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock and Clyfford Still."

To wrap up this package McShine was obliged to manipulate his material with considerable stretching, trimming and shoving. Although particular works in the show offered compelling testimony to the contrary, the curator insisted that his group of idiosyncratic artists, whatever their temperament, habitat and training, or whether they were practical, visionary, lyrical or suicidal, were all motivated by the same 19th century romantic literary and religious notions. Within his format, McShine lumped together painters who frequented the boozy, garrulous urban ambience of the Cedar Bar, and those who painted in the presence of the rocks, waves and pure air of Maine. He made no distinction between outer-directed realist painters who employed referential clues to provide a sense of human scale for their revelations of nature and space, and inner-directed abstract painters who offered no such references, who depended on non-visual literary or philosophical explanatory props, and whose works were bound by the *de rigueur* ambiguities of imagery, flat picture plane and space of the modern academy. With his catch-all "Romantic" label, McShine ignored the difference between "classic" and "romantic" formal concepts to put Newman and Rothko (classic painters whose rhythms implacably echo the boundaries of the rectangle) in the same boat with Moran and Tack (romantic painters whose forms strain against the rectangular framework). While 19th century American landscape artists were indeed influenced by contemporary pantheistic attitudes toward the scenic wonders of their new land, McShine's arbitrary theory ran counter to pictorial evidence that they were also attentive to the workings, structure and minute details of natural forms and tried to account for them through careful observation and responsible drawing. That combination of the pragmatic and idealistic is a far cry from the self-centered, nihilistic drives of Mark Rothko or the ritual excremental outpourings of Jackson Pollock. There is as great a spiritual difference between the transcendental approach that Frederich Church brought to the creation of "Niagara" and Pollock's esthetic aspiration to "piss on the whole world" as there is a visual and volumetric difference between Church's grand waterfall and Pollock's decorative tarry tackle. To bolster his thesis, McShine quoted Rosenblum to characterize Fitz Hugh Lane's handsome little luminist painting "Brace's Rock, Eastern Point Gloucester" as having "that silent primordial void of light and space where material forms, whether animal, vegetable or mineral, are virtually pulverized or banished by the incorporeal deity of light." This nonsense is contrary to the visual record. Lane delineated Brace's pink rock with a convincing articulation of its weighty corporeal structure, and represented round hard stones and sturdy vegetation in the foreground. These forms may act as tangible foils for the deity of light, but they are certainly not pulverized and banished by it.

While it is bad enough for a museum to sanction a show in which works of art are dragooned into the service of an art history theory of such slanted oversimplifications, the real failures of this exhibition were esthetic and ethical. All paintings done prior to the sublime achievements of Pollock and company were exhibited in dark, constricted spaces, crammed together cheek by jowl or perched on top of one another. Hung in that gallery ghetto in their dated gilt frames, forced into the straitjacket of the curator's art historical schema, willy-nilly conjoined in harmful proximity to paintings of conflicting color or structure, the individual works had a hard time asserting themselves. In fact they seemed intentionally demeaned by the presentational format. In contrast, the *raison d'être* of this propaganda effort, the penultimate vision of the show, those works produced by the "inspired wisdom and courageous endeavor" of the abstract expressionists were hung in an ample gallery on virginal white walls, with adequate space between each painting. The effect of this contrived theatricality may have induced a sense of incomparable sublimity at MOMA for the credulous, but to my eye the display came across, at best, as a didactic exhibition that incidentally happened to bring some fine paintings into an unexpected museum context, and, at worst, as a combined hatchet and snow job. In either case, the exhibition didn't do justice to American painting between 1800 and 1950, though it did indicate how a museum dedicated to progressive art can become hidebound when it drags in dubious art historical theory to promote its own vested interests.

The exhibition "Modern Portraits: the Self and Others" at Wildenstein was based on a different but equally arbitrary curatorial concept. The premise here was that any image of the human head or body produced by a recognized modern master or a bona fide cult member of the New York school could be displayed as a portrait. Lichtenstein's overblown benday-dot image of a comic-strip blonde, Samaras's eerie blue x-ray photograph of a skull surrounded by a galaxy of glittering pin-heads, and Rivers's pop-art assemblage of found-object woodwork and paint were all proffered as portraiture. But despite these lapses there were images in this exhibition that actually evoked a sense of human presence and personality (the unique power of portrait painting), and these gave a breath of life to the show.

Picasso's superb drawing of Dr. Arabella Cone revealed that lady in all her mortal dignity with a few pencil marks that were at once casual, intense, sensuous and just. The somber Egon Schiele portrait of Johann Harms (alias George Bernard Shaw) that loomed up with such force at the recent Guggenheim survey exhibition was included here, along with two paintings by Vuillard in which the model and the environment are fused into one radiant image of light and color. One unorthodox work in the exhibition was Alice Neel's double portrait of a curly-headed youth and his gaudily bedecked transvestite friend. Neel's vision of her fellow creatures is candid, but humane, and while her drawing can range from the expressive to the casual, and she is cavalier about negative spaces, she offers her own distinctive perception of the bodily and psychic condition of her models. This endows her work with a

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startling sense of vitality.

Both of these exhibitions reflected the standard doctrines of the prevailing American Academy of the New. In an ironic historical switch, that unprecedented coalition of vanguard museum curators, critics, dealers and modern art historians has now become as inflexible and restrictive as the French Academy of the 19th century. However, inadvertently these two displays may have generated a few subversive waves. For those faithful devotees of the Museum of Modern Art who assumed that American painting began with Jackson Pollock, the "Natural Paradise" exhibition was an unexpected revelation of the quality of 19th century American art. It also affirmed the existence of an abiding native tradition of transcendental landscape painting. And for those viewers conditioned by contemporary critical zealots to believe that only nonobjective imagery is pure and therefore permissable, the exhibition at Wildenstein testified to the survival power of portrait painting.

Given the evidence of banal art establishment bias in the Wildenstein exhibition it was no surprise to discover that the organizers had no room on their walls for the subtle and solid portraits of Fairfield Porter, Edwin Dickinson and Lennart Anderson, painters who have brought sophisticated 20th century formal concepts, traditional drawing skills, and technical finesse to the art of portraiture. While the practice of semi-official exclusion of "painterly" realist work has prevailed in the American art scene in recent years, it may not be able to withstand the onset of those hordes of young figurative artists now emerging from art schools and colleges, not to mention the impact of defections to the straight figurative mode by former abstract-expressionist pop-art luminaries such as Jim Dine and Al Leslie. Could it be that landscape and portrait painting, once so central in Western art, but relegated to a peripheral role in recent years, may now offer a challenging new direction for those artists and viewers who are fed up with third-hand reruns of abstract and neo-dada styles? If so, though the critical fraternity is ill-prepared for it, an interesting esthetic exercise will be to determine whether these new inventions on old themes are good, or not.

Kenneth Evett

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Books Considered

Ends and Odds by Samuel Beckett

(Grove Press; $6.95, $1.95 paper)

Fizzles by Samuel Beckett

(Grove Press; $6.95, $1.95 paper)

I Can't Go On, I'll Go On edited by Richard W. Seaver

(Grove Press; $15)

Beckett's work for the '70s offers us a literary diet for a very small planet indeed. Prose degenerates into the scale of "residua" or "fizzles," drama decomposes into the shape of a "dramaticule," an "end," or an "odd." Presented to us in the guise of a fragment, something incomplete and inconclusive compared to the "nice dimensions, nice proportions" of larger compositions like *Endgame* or *Molloy*, Beckett's work now condenses and therefore ultimately sharpens the tensions evoked with far more amplification in his earlier work. In the new minutiae, constructions which come to us in a variety of small shapes and narrow sizes, every detail has been restricted to the boundaries of limited time and limited space. It is impossible to tell whether these bits and pieces take place in the blink of an eye, in eternity, or in precisely the amount of time it takes to read a paragraph or see a play performed. Each "fizzle," each "end," each "odd" encapsulates a highly stylized reality which seems to cry out for human compassion and meaning. For each is a tiny constellation of inventiveness and suggestiveness in which an unassimilated feeling, a sensation, or a mood is the frail remnant of some human experience gone but not forgotten. "The artistic effort," Beckett wrote long ago, "is not expansive, but a contraction." Reduced to the stature of diminutive grandeur in a world of ever-shrinking possibilities, Beckett's new forms refuse to collapse completely. Instead, they retrench by going underground.

But with Beckett, concerned with the problem of pursuing an authentic style more a question of vision then technique, less is suddenly more. *Fizzles* and *Ends and Odds* proclaim imaginary worlds as dense as any he has made before. A head, a hand, a lonely voice, or even a faint footfall is filled with as much intensity as silence and darkness itself. Isolated moments of beauty and simplicity are delicately clinging to life beneath this deceptively barren surface. It is a tiring style, as Beckett wrote of Proust, but it does not tire the mind. For in this miniaturized landscape form is content, content form: "The one is a concretion of the other, the revelation of a world."

On stage Beckett's experimentation with the plasticity of form is far more accessible than any discussion of it would seem to imply. At once sensational and intimate, empty but filled with implication, deserted yet filled with

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mysterious panic, each of the plays collected in *Ends and Odds* is simultaneously exacting and vague. Here drama features apparitions in place of dramatis personae, sinister stage presences which are never explained and never cease to pall. "I am not unduly concerned with intelligibility," the playwright told Jessica Tandy as she prepared to portray Mouth in *Not I* at Lincoln Center in 1972, "the piece must work on the nerves of the audience, not its intellect." As audiences on both sides of the Atlantic have already seen, *Not I* enters the imagination as a reality in itself and works with astonishing immediacy and clarity. Its Mouth without a body talks non-stop to an Auditor enshrouded in the folds of a djellaba—perhaps the longest 18 minutes in theater history. The "dull roar," the painful "buzzing" Mouth hears is the same mournful litany in our ears as we sit riveted in our seats. "You may find nothing in it," observed the actress, "but I suspect you will never forget it."

That Time is Beckett's companion piece to *Not I*. Here we have a modernist's John the Baptist, a head without a body "about ten feet above stage level midstage off centre." Though Beckett says he was working with Blake in mind, the "old white face" with "long flaring hair" evokes a visual fragmentation more appropriate to the exquisite desolation of a disembodied Dali head. Try as we may, we cannot rationalize its presence. But on stage its existence, as shifting and changing as the substance of our dreams, is agonizingly real. In his theater Beckett makes us enter a strange new world instead of remaining within the theatrical modifications of this one. The energy of this drama is not to be found in the verisimilitude of the action Beckett demonstrates on stage, but rather in the communicative force of the reality of that action itself. Surrounded by a sense of melancholy as well as doom, Beckett's unexplained figures are haunting stage realities which will quite simply not go away.

In *Footfalls* Beckett discards anatomical fragmentation for the daring simplicity of a gaunt woman pacing endlessly from right to left, back and forth, like one of Dante's damned. Old, bent, rigid, and pitiful, she was portrayed in London last year with unforgettable intensity by Billie Whitelaw in the world premiere production directed by Beckett himself. In this piece Beckett makes us "hear the feet, however faint they fall." But the naturalism of the scene is undermined, for the lighting is dim, "strongest at floor level, least on head." It is the sound of the footfalls, not the sight of any human body, which determines the rhapsody of footsteps in the diminishing light, diminishing sound, and diminishing space of this "faint, though by no means invisible" play: "the motion alone is not enough." What mysterious "it all" impels the rhythm of a three-act structure in this undersized play? "Strange or otherwise," we never know for sure. We return to the only reality we have ever really had, the pacing of the play itself.

Fizzles perform similar feats in microcosmic prose. Here a little language is a dangerous thing in which "the subject falls far from the verb and the object lands somewhere in the void." "Still," the only one of the eight pieces originally cast in English rather than French, is Beckett's aubade to the dusk in the shape of a lonely paragraph: "Bright at last close of a dark day the sun shines out at last and goes down." Certainly no one in heaven or earth ever spoke the strange English of "Still," a syntax which offers us the verbal equivalent of solitude. A figure sits all alone at a window and watches the "faint afterglow" as the sun slowly sets on the enigma of a day. This is a room with a view, but missing from every horizon is the sympathy of another human figure.

Beckett's language appears to be as frozen into place as the still figure it depicts: we cannot thaw it out by decoding the sentences. But appearances are deceiving. This body and this language are not so "still" after all. "Trembling all over," "Still" confronts us with an ingenious interaction of light and darkness, sound and silence, and motion and fixity. "Still" itself, punctuating the text two dozen times, is on a journey of disorienting repetition. It is sometimes "silent," sometimes "motionless," sometimes "yet." "Quite" poses still other problems: it is alternately all inclusive and somewhat inclusive ("All quite quiet apparently"). It, too cannot be finally distilled. Beckett therefore creates a binary world which is simultaneously moving and not moving, "quite still," "not quite still at all," and "so quite still again." Words and their implications have most of their life still before them in a little text forever on the run. The quest for fixity in a world of process turns out to be "quite" still-born.

I Can't Go On, I'll Go On, recycling the heroic last line of *The Unnamable*, is an anthology more odd than anything even Beckett himself has recently made. Here we have such curiosities as *Molloy* Part I, missing the related trip of the detective Moran. At the risk of sounding too much like Malone when he examines Sucky Moll's ear-rings ("Why two Christs?, implying that in his opinion one was more than sufficient. To which she made the absurd reply, Why two ears?"), one questions the advisability of reducing the material to what amounts to disfiguration. Beckett's work comes to us already Sanforized: everything is lost by shrinking it further.

Nevertheless, the anthology contains something new: the first American printing of *Lessness*, a "fizzle" with chance serving as collaborator. In designing this oddity Beckett says he composed 60 compact sentences cohering very strictly to seven clusters of imagery. Reactivating data-processing, he then threw the sentences into a bag and drew them out in random order twice. The resulting sequence forms the order in which we read the 120 sentences of *Lessness*. Beckett then divided the piece into 24 paragraphs of varying length using similar terrorist tactics. But in *Lessness* chance and choice meet in a spirit of detente, for each individual sentence has been carefully regulated by Beckett's firm system of synchronization. The method employed in determining the sequence is peculiar, but in Beckett the forms are always many "in which the unchanging seeks relief from its formlessness."

Beckett's exploration of minute forms leaves "no maggot lonely" in its search for some small fixity in a world "trembling all over." There is little of Eliot's "still point of the turning world," but there are nonetheless harvests of invention the writer can celebrate while "waiting for Godot to come . . . or for night to fall." Concerned with illustration and commemoration, Beckett's new work brings us a literary still point if not a metaphysical one, "a help, but not a real protection." At the close of every dark day the writer, "still throwing the javelin," is still "listening for a sound." But in this "ruinstrewn land" he makes us suddenly rediscover the simplicity of evensong: "the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more." This is Beckett's still-life after all.

Enoch Brater

Enoch Brater teaches English at the University of Michigan and recently edited a collection of essays on Beckett.

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talking at the boundaries by David Antin

(New Directions; $11.95, $3.95 paper)

i had always had mixed feelings
about being considered a poet "if robert lowell is a
poet i dont want to be a poet if robert frost was a
poet i dont want to be a poet if socrates was a poet
ill consider it"

For the past few years, David Antin, who has been, at various times, an engineer, a linguist, an art critic and a poet, and who is currently professor of Visual Arts at the University of California, San Diego, has been performing spontaneous "talk poems," improvisations made for particular occasions in particular places and then recorded on tape and transcribed on the typewriter. At first, Antin thought of these improvisations as "lectures" or "talks," but one time, when he and his wife, the painter Eleonor Antin, were driving back from Pomona College in LA to their home in Solana Beach, they decided to listen to the tape of the Pomona talk, and Eleonor said, "My God, it's a poem." Her husband agreed: *"because i see all poetry as some kind of talking. . . and because ive never liked the idea of going into a closet to address myself over a typewriter."* "I see my talking pieces," says Antin, "as philosophical inquiries to which I try to bring the resources of language, not only my own language, but natural language in its natural setting." He is careful to insist that such a "talk poem" is not prose, for prose is "an image of the authority of 'right thinking' conveyed primarily through 'right printing'—justified margins, conventional punctuation, and regularized spelling." Indeed, when *Boundary 2, a Journal of Postmodern Literature* was preparing the galleys of Antin's first "talking piece," "what am i doing here?" he insisted that the entire "poem" be reset because the typesetter had inadvertently set it up as prose with the "straight jacket" of left and right margins, thus obscuring the central fact that *"these texts are the notations or scores of oral poems."*

Is this all pretentious nonsense? Anyone interested in the "boundaries" of contemporary "poetry" should begin by reading the heated exchange between William Spanos and Robert Kroetsch, the editors of *Boundary 2*, as to whether "what am i doing here?" deserved publication (see Spring 1975 issue). Kroetsch takes the conservative position: he argues that Antin's talk-poem assumes that "to write at all is somehow to create art"; that a talk-poem "becomes poem as pure content. . . .an avoidance of the problem of form," and that it is "Naive in its avoidance of selection." Spanos, on the other hand, admires the poem's "structural rhythm—an interspersion of 'story' and speculation," its "rhythm of an intelligent and sensitive speaking voice, which probably accounts for the sense of exploration it generates." He argues that Antin's text *"reverberates* with echoes of the past (the oral poetry of Homer, Plato's Dialogues, the whole Parry and Lord Singer of Tales context) and is at the same time utterly *situated* in the present: McLuhan, the French *parole* vs. *ecriture* debate, Heideggerian phenomenology, and of course, the whole thrust of American poetry toward oral 'composition.' "

These claims are surely extravagant, but Spanos understands what Antin is up to. Yet Kroetsch's doubts are not without foundation and I want to consider them first. In the special Antin issue of *Vort* the poet David Bromige observes that the real problem raised by Antin's "talk poems" is that when we see them *in print*, we lose the sense of immediacy, of voice, of gesture that accompanies their oral presentation. In print, the language itself must create the speaker's presence, testifying to what is "said." Traditional poetry used such devices as meter and rhyme to remind the reader of its status; here we have only blank spaces (breath pauses) and jagged margins as recurrent indicators that this is *not* prose. Try as one may to remember that the words on the page constitute *"parole"* rather than *"ecriture,"* one gets a bit bored in the process of following one of Antin's 20 page "philosophical inquiries."

The Antin talk-poem is not, then, likely to serve as a useful model for other poets; in the hands of a lesser master, it might easily become, in Kroetsch's words, "pure content," "Naive in its avoidance of selection." But then, as David Bromige puts it, "Who talks like David Antin?" And this brings us to the positive dimension of *talking at the boundaries*. Antin is surely one of the wisest, wittiest, most perceptive and human "talkers" we have, and whatever the value of the genre in the abstract, *his* talk poems do have what Spanos calls "structural rhythm." In the first place, the reader must not be fooled by Antin's naive stance, his seemingly flat empiricism, his air of being no more than a casual "talker." Antin is never merely a camera. Each of these eight pieces is organized around a central theme or image: it may be the nature of memory and identity ("what am i doing here?") or the question of mimesis ("remembering/recording/representing") or the meaning of marriage ("a private occasion in a public place"). Each talk-poem seems to move forward by purely random means when, in fact, the words continually loop back to a limited set of variables provided at the beginning of each "talk." Antin's most notable influence is Gertrude Stein, the Stein of "Composition as Explanation" and *The Making of Americans*. Take the second poem, "is this the right place?" delivered at the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia in lieu of an anticipated "lecture" on Marcel Duchamp. It begins:

when i was asked what i wanted to talk about before i came here
i picked up the telephone in san diego and bill miller
from the philadelphia art museum spoke to me on the phone
said "what are you going to talk about?" and i had
about five seconds to decide and in the five seconds
i realized that theres something peculiar about talking on a
telephone when youre three thousand five hundred miles away
which is approximately the distance long winded crows
take when they go directly from san diego to philadelphia
and i remembered philadelphia very vaguely as i kept trying
to think of philadelphia im an old new yorker as youll prob-
ably recognize from my accent which is fairly marked and
i thought of philadelphia "what does philadelphia have?"

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This "overture" immediately introduces the notion of *space* (or sense of place) and sets the stage for the witty exploration that follows. The telephone can seemingly bridge space, yet Philadelphia and California retain their separate identities. The word "philadelphia" appears six times in these 13 lines (five times in the last five lines), each time in a slightly altered context, as if the speaker were trying to come to terms with the reality behind the name.

Once Antin has set up his key words and phrases—*telephone, five seconds, philadelphia, ninety-mile drive, California*—the rest follows with great comic gusto. The central question: "is this the right place?" initially produces a hilarious account of cross-country plane travel (on the top of page 28 the word "plane" and its cognates occurs in almost every line). For Antin, the West-East plane trip with its inevitable loss of three hours of daylight becomes a journey "into the past," "into some time thats anterior to your own time," and he describes with deadpan literalism how one tries to occupy oneself on such a journey so as to avoid the frightening sense of being swallowed up by time. After the bloody mary (consumed somehow much too early in the day) and the earphones and the tasteless food and the radio news, the movie begins:

> and then they put on a movie and you don't really want to hear the movie because there is a movie about a rodeo clown you know this because you see his face and its all white and somebody is beating him up and you dont know why and you dont really care but you watch it and people come by and someone is computing his expense account next to you and you say to yourself "what place is this?" "is this a right place?" and "where am i going in this right place?" somehow im over kansas and you look down and you say "this must be kansas because thats how long ive been travelling" but you cant see kansas what you see are rifts in clouds and you wonder "what place is that under there?"

Here the effect of verbal and phrasal repetition is to disorient both speaker and audience. What is a "right place" and what does it prepare you for? "ive always had this fear," Antin notes, "that experience prepares you for what will never happen again." And he introduces a new key word—"worth." What is college worth? What is life worth? What is "this place" worth? Antin now has us in the palm of his hand and so he stops to tell a story. The "interspersion of 'story' and speculation" is, as William Spanos notes, one of the central features of Antin's talk-poems; in bringing narrative back into poetry he does enlarge the horizons of the closed lyric, bringing it closer to the oral tradition. In his laconic account of why and how he left the New York art world for the California art world, Antin provides a marvelous image of the fortuitousness, irrationality, and pleasurable confusion of contemporary American life. He recalls that he took the San Diego job by "accident," but once he set out for the West, he seemed to be living in a comic surrealistic nightmare. In a Phoenix motel, he accidentally heard the news that Andy Warhol had been shot back East; later, his sick child needed a doctor, but the "medical centers" of Southern California seem to have no doctors, at least not during lunch hour; "medical centers" in Southern California are beautifully designed and covered with iceplant. There are no doctors but too many dentists, and we hear anecdotes about one or two of these citizens. Trying to make his way in the New West, Antin developed the nagging conviction that "this culture develops a feeling in one or in ones life that this is not the right place no matter where you are it isnt the right place because its not the right time."

And so it goes. Antin is not bitter about these problems; his stance is amused, bemused, detached, skeptical. Life, after all, is like that. Thoughts circle back to his own "college" days, City College having been the "place" Antin attended after a stint in a bubble-gum factory. Was this the right place? After majoring "in about eighteen different things," the poet felt wholly unprepared for "life." But the system would not allow such deviation:

> and i walked in with my program for a physiological psychological major or whatever it was and they said to me "you have graduated" and i said "i have graduated? how could i have graduated? i didnt take hygiene 71" they said "you have graduated graduated" and i said "graduated?" they said "yes we will take we will accept zoology 32 as hygiene 71" i said "but it isnt i dont know all about those sex practices you describe in hygiene 71 ill never know and ill be sent out into the world whereas all ill know about will be the various nervous systems of the vertebrates" and they said "no no no youve graduated" i said "i havent had math 61" and they said "math 61 is elementary mathematics youve had the theory of complex functions out!" and there i was not that i couldnt support myself id been supporting myself since i was sixteen but i wasnt prepared for being issued forth from this preparational device this institutional preparation device i really wasnt ready for it i didnt know what i was going to do what was i going to do with my life?

In this passage, one should note the brilliant variations on the word "graduated," and the subtle progression from "i didnt," "i

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havent" "i dont know" to "i couldnt" "i wasnt prepared," "i really wasnt ready." By the time we come to the end of this section, we know, of course, that Antin *was* "prepared," that he was "doing it all along," that indeed, "i could do anything i wanted." Well, then, is this the right place? In the poem's conclusion, a kind of anti-crescendo, Antin declares: "ive never had the sense of being adequately prepared for it its always arrived too early it should have arrived later." But "accident" is the secret of art as well as of life:

> how do you know when youre through with something? you know because the phone rang as somebody once pointed out and then you cant ever get back to it again and its as ready as it will ever be because theres no reason to go on the telephone rang why not? now i might say of this particular discourse that theres no place at which i can end it without producing a kind of profoundly pornographic poetic effect which i assure you i can do i could produce a vast symphonic conclusion and you might walk out feeling benefited but i wont do it

Not that this disclaimer is a sleight of hand. Antin has "done it," although in a wholly non-traditional way. The strictest formalist would have to admire the orderly structure of "is this the right place?", which begins with a ringing telephone and ends with "the telephone rang," which starts with one of the central human questions and demonstrates that "it" ("any place") is and is not the right place, depending on our angle of vision, our mood, the time of day, and a hundred other contingencies.

Despite his protestations to the contrary, then, Antin does rely upon a principle of selection. "Poetry," as he puts it in one of the later pieces, is not just "talk" but "improved talk." Whether "poetry" is the best term for the sort of "improved talk" Antin gives us is another question. His improvisational technique resembles what Levi-Strauss has called *bricolage*; "is this the right place?" sounds as if Gertrude Stein had collaborated with Mark Twain, injecting his humor, his dialect, and especially his version of the tall tale into her austere and immaculate verbal compositions. But whatever we choose to call Antin's texts, their ingenious network of repetition, their interweaving of narrative and rumination, their presentational immediacy and speculative complexity make *talking at the boundaries* one of the most challenging "art works" of the mid-'70s.

Marjorie Perloff

Marjorie Perloff is professor of English at the University of Southern California and author most recently of *Rhyme & Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats* (Humanities).

The Fabians by Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie

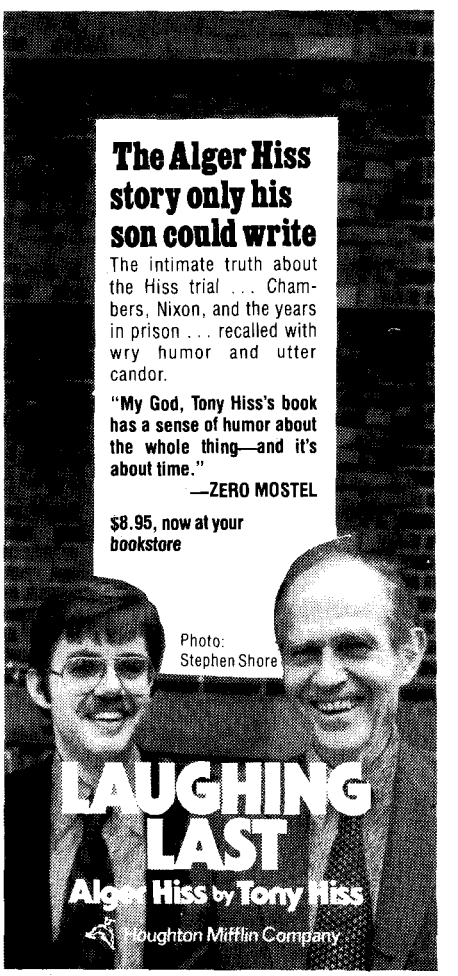
(Simon and Schuster; $12.95)

"Oh, the Fabians," said young Rupert Brooke, who was a second-generation acolyte, "I would to God they'd laugh and be charitable." Despite the looming presence of Bernard Shaw, who was an anomaly, the importance of being earnest was not lost on the first Fabians. Deliberately elitist and small in numbers (at the height of their influence there were only 700 of them in London), they were the white-collar brains trust which turned England leftward in the decades just before and just after World War I.

Whatever their ideas and ideals—and they ranged from ascetic dreamers and determined social climbers to philosophizing homosexuals and flagrant philanderers—they were possessed by a shared sense of moral purpose which cut through political and intellectual disagreements and made them the technicians of the left. The original Fabians—the self-styled "Old Gang" who are Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie's absorbing subject—had not at first been aspiring technocrats. Rather, they emerged in the early 1880s as a spin-off from one of the many splinter radical societies seeking spiritual direction and the company of congenial intellects.

The first Fabians began in 1884 as the "Fellowship of the New Life." Led by Frank Podmore, whose real interest was psychial research, and Hubert Bland, who chased women, nine of the 15 members restlessly founded another offshoot, "to obtain information on all contemporary movements and social needs" in order to "help on" the reconstruction of society. The name Podmore chose for the new organization was deliberately obscure, a dubious reference to the Roman general Fabius Cunctator, whose tactics against Hannibal were both cautious and forthright. Soon their genteel causeries attracted inconspicuous political novices who enjoyed spirited debates yet had no contact with working-class life and little experience at political agitation. But they had brains, and social consciences, and were looking for causes in which to apply both.

The MacKenzies pick up the new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members one by one—Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, Graham Wallas, Sydney Olivier, Edith Nesbit, Annie Besant, Beatrice Potter, Ramsay MacDonald, H.G. Wells—and provide capsule biographies up to the point at which each life begins to impinge upon another and the Old Gang is carried a step further, until we return again to a familiar figure at a later stage in life. The incremental method works. Few paragraphs take flight, but the collaborators (who previously produced the most solid life of H.G. Wells) have the knack for extracting a single telling line from a longer quotation, and the narrative moves briskly as we observe the Fabians as a matter of deliberate strategy "permeating" the political parties, new and old, rather than founding or dominating one. A Fabian policy statement in 1896, drafted by Shaw and Webb, had declared that the membership was unconcerned with a political party's name or principles, and that the Society would exert "all the pressure and persuasion in its power to bear on existing forces" in order to bring about "Social-Democracy." By avoiding the political dirty work in favor of research and education, the Fabians did make their continuing impact, but they paid the price of losing the opportunity to lead the new Labour party, or saving the faltering Liberal party, or placing their operatives in positions of power in the Conservative party.

Fabianism could be a full-time occupation only for a few leading spirits. Sidney and Beatrice (Potter) Webb lived on Beatrice's patrimony while doing economic and social research which did effect changes in welfare, penal and local government legislation; and Edward Pease, a holdover from the "New Life," was the full-time Fabian secretary. But Bernard Shaw (who married a millionairess Fabian newcomer in 1898) was also busy carving a career as a playwright and social philosopher; Hubert Bland (in respites between impregnating women) was becoming a success as a journalist and his wife Edith as a writer of children's books; Sydney Olivier was often abroad on Colonial Office assignments; Annie Besant turned from platform spellbinding to Theosophy and went off to India; Ramsay MacDonald utilized the money he had married into in 1896 to propel a political career. Now fortyish, and flailing in various political and philosophical directions, the Fabian elders began to irritate even the patient Charlotte Shaw, who complained to a friend that the Society "now consists of a parcel of boys and old women thinking they are making history, and really making themselves ridiculous."

G.B. Shaw *by Jack Coughlin*

They were really doing both. With Charlotte's money and a timely bequest from a deceased Fabian solicitor, the Webbs in 1895 had founded the London School of Economics. It was a turning point. "It followed logically," as the Mackenzies put it, "from [Sidney Webb's] commitment to permeation, and from his belief that Fabians should be educators rather than agitators." The policy proved difficult to protect once the Webbs flattered H.G. Wells into the Society. They had read Wells's messianic social engineering proposals in his novels and tracts, and hoped that his persuasive pen could be harnessed to the Fabian cause. Instead his equally persuasive personality began to dominate an increasing number of younger Fabians (the self-styled "Fabian nursery") who like Wells wanted to see more movement—even revolutionary action—and less talk. H.G. agitated relentlessly while womanizing carelessly among the daughters of the Old Gang.

In 1906 Wells began his formal campaign among the restive younger Fabians, and even the staid Marjorie Pease was excited, writing hopefully of the Society to Jane Wells, "It seemed so narrow & exclusive & I always likened it to a Baptist Chapel dominated by Deacon Webb!" Committees met; position papers were drawn. It became, basically, Shaw against Wells, with Wells making an undisguised takeover bid without any serious idea what he would do with the Fabians if he won control. All the while, counterproductively, he issued polemics on sexual freedom which hardly disguised their rationalization of a private life he increasingly conducted in public. That December, in a climactic meeting, Shaw destroyed Wells in a speech punctuated with humorous but effective malice. Wells withdrew. But he continued fussing amid the wreckage, Shaw finally writing to him, "You are forgetting your committee manners, if a man can be said to forget what he never knew. . . . There is an art of public life which you have not mastered, expert as you are in the art of private life. The fine art of private life consists almost wholly in taking liberties; the art of public life consists fundamentally in respecting political rights." The MacKenzies quote only the first of these lines from a long and tantalizingly quotable letter; yet much in it illuminates the Fabian style as nothing else does, for Fabians had honed committee politics into a fine art.

With the Wellsian catastrophe averted, but their enthusiasms cooling, the Old Gang began to relinquish power in an evolutionary manner. Fabians began to play a larger role in the Labour party as it became clear that Labour was a rising force. (In the 1920s and the 1940s Labour cabinets would be full of Fabians.) Aging friends began drifting apart, younger rebels, such as G.D.H. Cole and Leonard Woolf, would become the technicians and theoreticians of the postwar generation. But the Old Gang was a hardy breed. Some, like Wallas and Bland, died within the Biblical span; others, like Wells and MacDonald, broke ranks and went their own ways. But many lived into their 80s and 90s, sometimes (like Webb or Shaw) taking a parental interest in the Society, sometimes in retirement forgetting it completely.

It is here that the MacKenzies' own interest in their book appears to flag. Chronology in the last chapters becomes confusing; the authors weave and backtrack, and the number of factual errors multiplies as their headlong haste to close increases. Still the founders stubbornly lived on, Webb—Lord Passfield in 1929—dying at 88 a few years after Beatrice, who, burdened by chronic social guilt, had refused to the end to be a "Lady." Charlotte Shaw died at 86 in 1943, having been crippled in her last years by a painful back ailment but having bravely written nonetheless to Beatrice in 1940, "We feel we have lived our lives & had a very good share of the best that was going."

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G.B.S., full of honors, including a Nobel Prize and the recognition that he was the best playwright in English since Shakespeare, saw to it that the Labour government, headed by Clement Attlee, the second Fabian to become prime minister, interred the Webbs in Westminster Abbey "to commemmorate an unparalleled partnership." Three years later, in 1950, Shaw died at 94, writing plays and issuing polemics to the end. Yet even then the last chapter had not closed. Edward Pease, the first Fabian secretary, died in 1955 at 98, and four years later old Percival Chubb, who had been an original Fabian but then moved to America, to take up Ethical Culture, died at 99. By then yet another generation of Fabians was in the research and persuasion business, and with the social millenium remote, there was still much to do.

Stanley Weintraub

Stanley Weintraub, editor of *The Shaw Review*, has written a number of books about G.B.S. and his contemporaries.

Robert Frost: The Later Years, 1938-1963 by Lawrance Thompson and R.H. Winnick

(Holt, Rinehart and Winston; $17.95)

The recorded facts, heavily falling, leaving who knows what still in the air, tell us that Robert Frost was mainly an ornery, petulant, spiteful man, looking out (and look out) for number one. That he could also be one of the most delightful of talkers is a fact accruing from the testimony. But he often had to be admired into goodness, flattered into radiance. His balloon got going, he was sailing clear, friendly faces were looking up, and then a sudden suspicion, a rival in the scene, would make it crash. Then he was very different indeed from the man who called "Hello" to the rarer, the shyer woodland plants. Then he was a desperado of the word, he was stricken, he was death.

Frost was quagmired with those special sensitivities that lie in wait in some natures, seeming to be at once accidents and fatalities. His fears and hurts were oversized. It could not have helped that his father was violent, abrupt. Then, too, certain New England classmates, harrying his soft-souled mother from her teaching post, hurled down a gauntlet almost too heavy to pick up. Yet he would pick it up, he would not be belittled. His pride became as ugly and resourceful as Hephaestus, and fame his capricious Aphrodite. He would collect a heap of honors to fill up the gap in his self-esteem, to hide from himself (from "them") the history of his shames, and to match the height of his secret sense of worth. Henceforth you loved him submissively, or you killed him. Would Elinor White not marry him as instantly as he demanded? Then he would drown himself, never mind that she had reasons (as well as a knack for cruelty). He carried about with him a hair-trigger sense of injury. He was failing as a poultry farmer, the local butcher sneered at his poverty, the other shoppers spurted laughter; leave the bundle of meat on the counter, get out, remember somehow to even the score. But how? To be a "minor poet" in New England . . . "better that a millstone were hanged about your neck." Thirty-seven, thirty-eight, and what have you published, Mr. Frost? No, to be a poet was to be in it for everything, the "heavyweight" crown, nothing less.

Luckily he was an apple of the Hesperides; his summer was long, but soon everyone had heard of him, his name was golden. And in America he was number one: the Pulitzer prize committee, the public, even T.S. Eliot, from his English fastness, said so. Now then the rage for self-justification, with its spawn of vindictiveness, its comic self-importance, would surely die. Knowing he was good, knowing he was very, very good—surely this would give him substance, stability.

But cross or neglect him and he still went up like ash. At Breadloaf you were advised to lose your tennis match with Frost—better avoid a scene. A bad review, some slight, some check, would send him to his sickbed: face up for the brief peeves, face down for the benders. Once at a reading when Archibald MacLeish took up with "You, Andrew Marvell," that dangerously famous poem, Frost thieved the crowd by, how could it be? a handful of flaming papers: "you're a good poet," commented Bernard DeVoto, "but you're a bad man." Honored at a luncheon reluctantly attended by Carl Sandburg, Frost said, "Let Carl pay a tribute to me. He oughta praise me, my poetry." Carl declined. Was his publisher about to bring out an anthology of literary essays containing not a single reference to America's best-

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known and best-loved poet, Robert Frost? Withdraw it or else. It was withdrawn. And so it went on, the demands, the affronts, the counterassaults, the starvation.

The new and final volume of Lawrance Thompson's biography of Frost shows the poet's cancerous need for importance spreading, in his last years, into politics. As Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, he dubbed himself "Poet-in-Waiting." And like some political starlet he did indeed wait for the big break—"a chance to tell Congress what to do next" (even though "they wouldn't do it"). The occasion was arranged; but Congress (some troublesome bill) failed to show up. Frost, after all, was only a wordsman, a flyweight on the political machine. What, for all his "point," his tart-tongued anti-liberalism, could this puckish sage accomplish?

Once, it is true, for 90 minutes he virtually gave audience to Khrushchev—his sudden nervous illness, miles from the premier's Georgian dacha, promptly bringing the great man to *him*. But he was "hurt," so he expressed it—was it not a personal affront—when the Cuban missile crisis showed Khrushchev going back on his promise to Frost of none but "noble" rivalry with the United States. And in innocently—well, wickedly attributing to the premier his own impatience with liberals (those eternal fussers at Gordian knots), probably he did more harm than good—President Kennedy, at any rate, was not amused. Reading "Mending Wall" in Moscow was no doubt well-intentioned but the wall of listeners visibly stiffened. And was supporting Kennedy the best way to shove back the New Deal? Well, he had casually predicted Kennedy's presidency, the press boomed it, the young senator wrote to express his admiration and gratitude, a bond was established; and anyway Kennedy was from New England as well, a Catholic and therefore a Puritan too. When Kennedy won, Frost felt like a king-maker. Now "to get a secretary of the arts into the President's cabinet" (however that might seem a New Deal for artists). Kennedy, however, but used Frost to grace his inauguration—which he did with a performance that all but upstaged the upstart President, touchingly dramatizing as it did the Walter Mitty ineptitude of artists and the infirmities of old age (the outdoor light proving too harsh for an ill-prepared Frost to read by). For the most part, Frost was merely humored by the powerful, humored because he was quotable (and a playful, popular lion to the press), humored because of the size of his name, and because of the always surprising prestige of poetry among political magnates. Frost symbolized and even exercised power of a kind, but not the kind he aspired to. He was an ambassador from an invisible kingdom to whom the kings of the earth, not unimpressed, could spare 90 minutes.

One thing, however, Frost did help accomplish through his influence in Washington: the release in 1958 from St. Elizabeth's hospital for the insane of an arch rival, the shamed and debilitated prince of poetic modernism, Ezra Pound. Toward this Frost made a sudden run that contrasted violently with his years of standing still, resisting. He had once said, not without point, that if "we should admire Ezra for being a great poet in spite of his being a great traitor, so we must condemn him for a greater traitor in spite of his being a great poet. That works both ways. . . ." Frost, after all, was a patriot. Besides, Pound had as good as betrayed him by spreading in print lies Frost himself had told him. And had not Pound tried to take credit for setting Frost forth to the world? And tried to melt him down into vers libre? Pound was perhaps not only too wicked but too powerful to set loose again in one's thoughts. And so the years passed and the prince remained locked in the tower. Then Archibald MacLeish asked Frost to speak to the right people in the Department of Justice. He could make the difference, could prove the point on the lance. Frost spoke, and spoke again, and still again, and the job was done. "I did the whole thing," he was later to say, while Pound noted that "he ain't been in much of a hurry."

"I sometimes think that all we ask is Glory," Frost wrote for Kennedy's inauguration, treating us to the kind of halo-logy lie our national vanity delights in. Yet glory, that food of the gods that leaves mere human beings famished, was most of what Frost asked, and most of what he had. True, he enjoyed numerous friendships, talked a good mile, wrote a good letter, ministered to the promising young. He had also, after his wife's death, the devotion of his secretary, Kay Morrison, that "girl," as she seemed to him at first, that "silken tent" of poised being, she thanks to whom birds' song would never again be

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Robert Frost *by David Schorr*

the same—Antigone to a fretful Oedipus. (Yet how little we see and feel of this in the biography; there Kay Morrison is a generous ghost.)

True, on the other hand, that he was not a contented man. And true that if you opened the family closet horrible things came out. Had not his wife turned her death, in 1938, into a final, the cruelest, reproach? Of what, exactly, she may not have been able, and certainly was not willing to say: Frost and others found this hostile woman mysterious. Nor would Lesley let him live with her to "ruin her children as he had ruined his own." Had he ruined them? Ruined, except for Lesley, they somehow were. His son, Carol, pressed into himself by a sense of failure, shot himself. But had Frost been more distant toward him, or harsher, than hundreds of thousands of other fathers to their sons? Was it his fault that Carol made too much of perfection? More, his daughter Irma was institutionalized (as his sister had been) for sexual paranoia. Frost was a prude, but, again, was his Puritanism unusual, was he in particular to blame? Were his children, no longer children when they collapsed, not also responsible for themselves? His biographer says he "accidentally" taught them "more fear than courage." This at once exonerates and blames him: he remains the destroyer. Frost himself said, "Evil clings . . . in all our acts." Yet, however he may have "failed" as a father (he can scarcely be said to have triumphed), his personal responsibility is incalculable—and would be even with ampler evidence. The ruins smoke in ambiguity.

Though Frost all but lost his soul to his pride, his poetry shows that it nonetheless remained extraordinarily open to the world, to spring pools, life-gripped New Englanders, the stars, with what Simone Weil called "creative attention": attention that purifies itself by reverently thinking the quality into things. Edward Thomas spoke of the "deep and mysterious tenderness" of "The Death of the Hired Man," "Home Burial," and other poems; and this is the truth that, immovably lying off the dry shores of the work, matters ultimately. If Frost's crippled self-belief injured his work, it was chiefly by flattening it with caution. The poems are somewhat tight-lipped, as if they had bitten off a smidgin of satisfaction before the world could steal it. Everyone prizes their wise-farmer's wit and lyricism but the general tone is grey. Like his antithesis, T.S. Eliot, Frost lacks a germ of spontaneity—heartiness, embrace. He mourns, rather secretly, his own existence. His poems on love are slight but those on aloneness have an unanswerable, bottomed-out authority. People are self-deserted, diminishing. No wonder Frost turned, outside and through the poems, to fame, that most public of things, that possible antidote to an old man's winter nights.

We have not been asked to envy or even judge Frost's life, only to witness it through the amassed narrative of Thompson's three volumes. But to what end? Such a biography *would* get written, and at least it has been done with reasonable competence. But done also in a dutiful, phlegmatic manner that leaves the life weighing on you like a stone. Delight as you may with Yevtushenko, who telegraphed to Frost: TODAY I READ AGAIN AND AGAIN YOUR POEMS. I AM HAPPY THAT YOU LIVE ON EARTH," delight too in Frost's prose, studded here, and still you may find the life, the biography, barren. The poetry, after all, is the best of the life without quite being biography, since it "lifts life above itself," in Hegel's words, although "in the very language of life."

Only the skills of a first-rate, a subtle, a dramatic, an unfashionable biographer could make Frost's life an experience, an entertainment, a lesson of sorts, instead of what it proves here, a glutinous record. Here, as in most biographies nowadays, is the bag emptied on the table. The biographer gives out the facts and hopes they add up to a man. Of

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course this can be done with varying degrees of flair, and Thompson at least had a literate sensibility and knew Frost so well and has researched so diligently that his details fell into place. R.H. Winnick, chosen by a fatally ill Thompson to carry on with the final volume, appears rather to push the facts along, and leaves them poor and bare. Moreover, he obtrudes a continuous suspiciousness of Frost, flattening motive, as if white and black somehow really came only to black (whereas in human beings they do not even reduce to grey). He sometimes conjures, as against discovers, "broad hints" of Frost's self-seeking; and he pontificates without summoning evidence. Although he does not omit the finer shades, on the other hand they are not finely shaded. (Symptomatically, even Thompson, as William H. Pritchard observed, indexed only Frost's uglier traits, Friendship excluded). Here we all but lurch from vanity to vanity, as, it seems, Frost's specific gravity requires. Yet five minutes of filmed interview, even a recorded witticism, a laugh, might alter one's perspective. Frost was doubtless vanity's fool, not to say victim, but surely he deserves better than Winnick's lustreless scorn. The entire biography, but especially the third volume, shows little creative attention. Not without justice, it leaves a self-indulgent man stranded in his own meanness—in over 1500 pages of it. Silence would have said nothing for Frost but, on the other hand, it would not have done him in.

Calvin Bedient

Calvin Bedient's most recent book is *Eight Contemporary Poets* (Oxford).

Correction

Katha Pollitt's poem "Intimation," reprinted in the poetry miscellany of February 5, was originally published in *The Nation*. We regret that this was not acknowledged in the presentation.

The Editors

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TRB, *from page 2*

Canadian prime minister Trudeau before the joint session of Congress. As for Warnke, a right-wing organization bought full-page advertisements the day he appeared, soliciting contributions up to $1000 to help block his appointment as arms negotiator. The confrontation occurred in one of those big Senate waxed-wood-panel hearing rooms. If Warnke can deal with the Russians the way he dealt with Senators Jackson, Tower and Stennis—patient, firm, deferential but not brow-beaten—we have an ideal negotiator. He is a white-haired, strong-faced figure who slouched behind a table while senators asked questions from their horseshoe above. The place dazzled with lights and was jampacked. Yes, he said without apology, he had opposed various new families of nuclear weapons as they were proposed, urging in each case that the Russians be first asked if they would make concessions. That, he said mildly, was how we got SALT I agreements in 1972. The Soviets were then allowed more strategic offensive ballistic missile launchers than the US; this was offset by the US technological lead which included multi-headed MIRVs. This is what successful negotiation means, he explained calmly. As Sen. Jackson tried to trip him up Warnke poured a glass of ice-water and did not raise his voice. Rarely do we see such aplomb.

On the same day that Warnke appeared, Congress, in joint session, had its first look at Prime Minister Trudeau, who is threatened by the separatist drive of French-speaking Quebec. The Quebec premier Rene Levesque was down in New York last month trying to reassure US bankers and investors. Accompanied by about 80 Canadian reporters Trudeau came to Washington to make what, in effect, was a political reply. The essence of the traditional US relationship to Canada is to trade, trust and take for granted. For Canada it is an infuriating big-brother attitude. But that 3000-mile unfortified border is one of the few really good things in a sorry world.

Clad in gray business suit with a jaunty rosebud boutonniere Trudeau pledged in a quiet, modulated voice "with all the certainty I can command that Canada's unity will not be fractured." Maybe it's unfair to the Quebecois (Trudeau called them Quebeckers) but everybody here hopes he's right. The friendly applause was not noisy but it went on and on and on.

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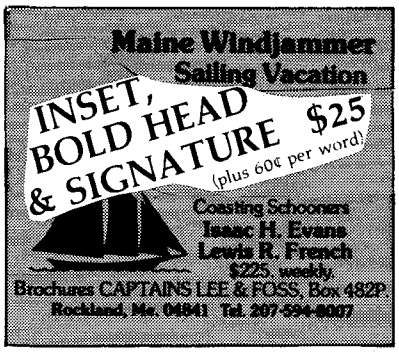

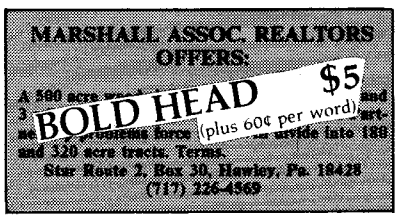

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Washington Diarist

Dams in Distress

It is not surprising that the western governors are upset by President Carter's decision to ask Congress to cut off the federal funding for 18 dams and other water-resource projects in 15 states. Some of them sourly pointed out that they are Democrats. But the President could as well retort that none of them carried their states for him in last year's election. This is especially true of Jerry Brown. When I was in California shortly before the election, I had the impression that every request for assistance from the Carter people was somehow lost in the in-tray in Sacramento. An old political hand said to me not long ago, "If I were Jimmy Carter, I'd have someone in the White House whose only job would be to keep an eye on Jerry Brown." The young governor of California is the only one of Carter's rivals in 1976 who will be a potential rival in 1980. Since the New Deal, dams always have been used by Presidents as a form of political pay-off. I do not think it is cynical to see Carter's request to Congress as a traditional exercise of political clout.

I came across one of the new administration men who had been sent on an errand to the Pentagon and got lost there, which is not only easy to do, but almost inevitable. When the monstrous building was first constructed, a story used to be told of a woman who was found screaming in the corridors to get out, because she was about to have a baby. When she was reproved and told that a woman so advanced in pregnancy should not have come to the Pentagon, she replied: "But I wasn't pregnant when I entered the building nine months ago."

The mid-term convention of the Democratic party—sometimes called its mini-convention—is one of the most interesting recent innovations in the working of the political system. The first mini-convention was held in 1974, but the then resident of the White House was not a Democrat. It will be a very different situation next year, when many of the rank and file of the party may wish to call President Carter to account, and especially to hold him to the very liberal platform that the party adopted in New York last year. One of Carter's assistants told me that if Carter is doing well at the end of this year, he will allow the delegates to the mini-convention to be chosen by election; but if he is doing badly, he will insist that they be appointed under the strict supervision of the Democratic National Committee, which he already firmly controls. That makes political sense from his point of view. It also will tell us at the time how he perceives the strength or weakness of his own position.

There is more than a little hypocrisy in the cries of outrage at last week's revelation that the CIA has paid money to King Hussein of Jordan. There is nothing venal about it, and nothing suspicious in the fact that it has been done secretly. It is a traditional method of diplomacy, and one that helps to create alliances, make peace more stable and the world more safe. As far as I am concerned, it is only a pity that, with the decline of royalty, great dynastic marriages can no longer be arranged. In the old days, Amy Carter's hand would already have been promised some Arab prince, perhaps, or a Chinese Communist. It made things much easier. But anyhow, if the public's "right to know," which I do not believe is a right that can be sensibly claimed, is carried much farther, all diplomacy will come to an end, and anarchy will prevail. I personally think that the sums of money paid by the CIA were rather modest, and that on the whole they went to heads of state to whom it was fitting that they should go.

The struggle of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers against the J.P. Stevens Company seems to me one of those few uncomplicated issues on which it is clear where justice lies. They have called for a consumer boycott of J.P. Stevens products, and I here list the brand names under which they may be found: *Sheets and pillowcases:* Beautiblend, Beauticale, Fine Arts, Peanuts (comic strip figures), Tastemaker, Utica, Utica & Mohawk, and the designer labels of Yves St. Laurent and Angelo Donghia. *Carpets:* Contender, Gulistan, Merryweather, Tastemaker. *Table Linen:* Simtex. *Hosiery:* Big Mama, Finesse, Hip-Lets, Spirit. *Towels:* Fine Arts, Tastemaker, Utica. *Blankets:* Forstmann, Utica. A federal judge has said that in its campaign against the union, J.P. Stevens has "with scant regard for the means employed other than their effectiveness interfered with, restrained and coerced its employees in the exercise of their rights. . . .flagrantly, cynically, and unlawfully." And this is 1977.

It is 15 years since John Glenn went into orbit, and last week the first space shuttle took to the air, piggybacking on its 747. This brings nearer the realization of an idea I have had for many years: that NASA should send a professional writer into space, so that he may tell us something more tantalizing than "One small step for man. . . ." I mean the idea seriously—and would volunteer myself—but I find that other writers to whom I suggest it think of it only as a way of getting rid of their own unfavorite colleagues. "I wouldn't mind putting Truman Capote into a capsule and pointing him towards the Milky Way," one said to me. But the joking apart, would it not be interesting to have a good writer bouncing around on the moon like a jelly baby, telling us what it is really like, or floating outside his space ship? With the space shuttle almost ready, the opportunity is there.

To return to those dams. The drought in the west, and especially in California, is very serious. But it is becoming so serious, as a result of the increase in population and industry, including the huge agro-industry, that building more dams may not solve the problem. When California is threatening to reach to the Missouri, if not to the Mississippi, for water, as in fact has been proposed, it is time to do some thinking. As more and more water is drained from the great western rivers, not only do those further down the rivers suffer, but the whole underground water level is affected. There is some evidence that vast areas of the southwest are subsiding. I am all for dams when they can be shown to be a genuine answer, and not merely a temporary postponement of more difficult decisions. The Army Corps of Engineers can hardly see a river without damming it, and one good result of Carter's request could be to take the Engineers out of the dam-building business forever.

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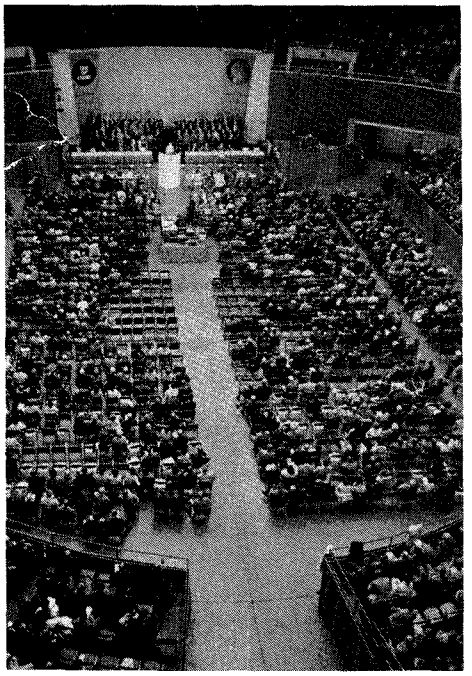
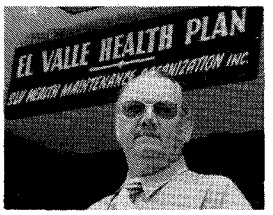
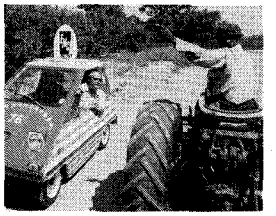


Annually, delegates from America's nearly 1,000 rural electric cooperatives and public power districts which serve some 25 million people across the nation, meet to formulate and adopt policies on national issues.

The simple fact is that conservation makes it possible to stretch out the world's dwindling energy resources while we develop new technologies



More doctors, water and sewer systems, and improved housing are today's community development targets for rural electrics, longtime leaders in spearheading better social and economic programs for local citizens. Robert Mace, manager of San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Monte Vista, Colo., is president of one of the state's five Health Maintenance Organizations.



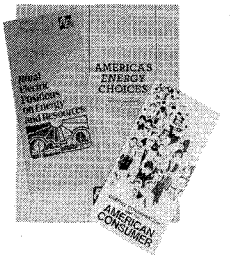
Flint Electric Membership Corporation, Reynolds, Ga., has grown from just over 2,800 members in 1944 to more than 30,000 in 1976. Meter readers use an electric car (dressed up for the bicentennial) to get to some of the homes, farms and businesses in the 15 counties where the cooperative serves.

So far in this country we've taken only small steps toward a real program of energy conservation.

Efficient use and management of all forms of energy are now imperative. Public awareness of this need must be greatly increased. People's consumption patterns will have to be altered; industry must make changes, and government policies to encourage and require wiser use must be implemented.

Conservation does not mean austerity nor a lower standard of living. On the other hand, without it as part of a comprehensive energy policy, energy shortages could in the long run severely restrict the opportunities and advantages we now enjoy, and limit our ability to pursue our traditional hopes and dreams for a better life.

America's rural electric systems



The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is the service organization for the nation's electric cooperatives. Write "Viewpoints," NRECA, 2000 Florida Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 for further information on rural electric energy positions.

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Box or menthol:

Carlton is lowest.

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See how Carlton stacks down in tar. Look at the latest U.S. Government figures for:

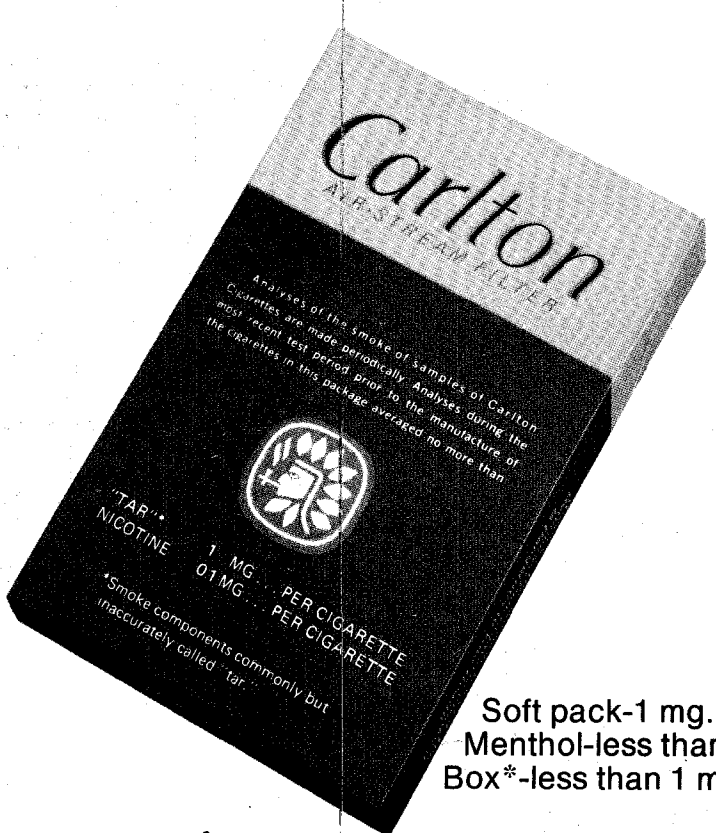
The 10 top selling cigarettes

	tar mg./ cigarette	nicotine mg./ cigarette
Brand P Non-Filter	25	1.6
Brand C Non-Filter	23	1.4
Brand W	19	1.2
Brand W 100	19	1.2
Brand M	18	1.1
Brand S Menthol	18	1.2
Brand S Menthol 100	18	1.2
Brand BH 100	18	1.0
Brand M Box	17	1.0
Brand K Menthol	17	1.4

Other cigarettes that call themselves low in "tar"

	tar mg./ cigarette	nicotine mg./ cigarette
Brand P Box	15	0.8
Brand K Mild	14	0.9
Brand W Lights	13	0.9
Brand M Lights	13	0.8
Brand D	13	0.9
Brand D Menthol	11	0.8
Brand V Menthol	11	0.7
Brand V	10	0.7
Brand M Menthol	8	0.5
Brand M	8	0.5
Carlton Soft Pack	**1**	**0.1**
Carlton Menthol	**less than 1**	**0.1**
Carlton Box	**less than *1**	***0.1**

*Av. per cigarette by FTC method


Carlton
AIR-STREAM FILTER
Analyses of the smoke of samples of Carlton cigarettes are made periodically. Analyses during the most recent test period prior to the manufacture of the cigarettes in this package averaged no more than
"TAR"*
NICOTINE
1 MG. . . PER CIGARETTE
0.1 MG. . . PER CIGARETTE
*Smoke components commonly but inaccurately called "tar."

Soft pack-1 mg.
Menthol-less than 1 mg.
Box*-less than 1 mg.

Less than 1 mg. tar.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Of all brands, lowest...Carlton 70: less than 0.5 mg. tar, .05 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report DEC. '76.

Soft Pack and Menthol: 1 mg. "tar", 0.1 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report DEC. '76. Box: 1 mg. "tar", 0.1 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

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